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**Citizenship and double consciousness:  
Muslims and multiculturalism in Britain**

Nasar Meer

Department of Sociology  
September 2007

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the  
requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Law

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my brothers and sisters. It is especially so to my parents, Ruqia Nissa and Khizer Mohammed Meer. Whilst not always comprehending why I have remained at university for so long, they have always valued the educational opportunities available to their children, opportunities which they themselves were not fortunate to enjoy, and so have encouraged us from the beginning.

## Abstract

This thesis makes both a theoretical and empirical contribution to the study of Muslims and multiculturalism in Britain. It specifically uses the work of the African-American thinker, W. E. B. Du Bois, to theorise how what I call 'Muslim-consciousness' connects to certain Muslim mobilisations for an improvement in their 'civic status.'

Muslim-consciousness is characterised as the advent of salient Muslim identities that are being adopted and deployed in various permutations by many Muslims themselves. The emergence of Muslim-consciousness is examined at length with reference to debates concerning race, religion and ethnicity. Civic status, meanwhile, is understood to be derived from various conceptions of citizenship.

It is argued that under the terms of a peculiarly British multiculturalism, a differentiated citizenship has prevailed for some minorities, which has recognised or supported some minority identity related particularities, and has helped to achieve an elevation of these minorities' civic status. The first part of the thesis explores these issues theoretically, before empirically investigating them in the second half of the thesis through the use of multi-method case-studies (including primary interviews, documentary evidence and discourse analysis). More specifically, the second half focuses upon salient Muslim mobilisations for the state funding of Muslim schools, discrimination legislation and a 'positive' public and media representation, as arenas in which Muslims are currently seeking an elevation of their civic status.

It is argued that an exploration of what is termed Muslim-consciousness, within and amongst some Muslim communities themselves, alongside the way in which this consciousness is understood politically (at both an official, governmental, level as well as discursively in public and media commentary), allows us to observe the operation of at least two types of minority consciousness. According to this thesis, these types of consciousness have previously been theorised by what is called the 'Hegelian Du Bois', and comprise the movement from a consciousness that exists *in* itself, and which is derived from the treatment of a dominant party, to a consciousness that exists *for* itself, and which, as such, is capable of mobilising on its own terms for its own interests. In Du Bois' terms, this consciousness risks turning in on itself, and becoming a 'double consciousness', when it is benignly ignored or malignly coerced.


These distinctions are framed within a schema taken from Du Bois and become progressively 'thicker' in capturing (a) the political dimension in which Muslim-consciousness in Britain is formed, (b) the nature and content of this consciousness *in* and *for* itself, alongside (c) the transformative potential it heralds for society as a whole. The thesis ends with a typology of contemporary Muslim-consciousness in Britain, before looking forward to emerging research agendas on these topics.



### Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other academic award. All views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:.....

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and curves, written over a dotted line.

DATE:.....

17 / 1 / 2008

## **Acknowledgments**

I would first of all like to thank Professor Tariq Modood for his supervision during the research and composition of this thesis. It has been a privilege to receive his guidance. I hope that the standard of the final submission is an appropriate reflection of this tutelage.

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Finally to Katherine: over the past few years we have probably made Easyjet and Virgin trains a small fortune from living, as we have since devolution (!), in different countries and enduring the obvious stresses that accompany long distance relationships. Yet most of this thesis was conceived when I was strewn on the carpet of whichever flat you had just moved into, and nodding in agreement or shaking with disapproval when reading the articles or chapters I had managed to print off or photocopy, before sprinting to catch whichever plane or train. It is genuinely re-assuring when the person closest to you understands this behaviour, without questioning the truly curious creature you must begin to resemble. So for your loving companionship, your astounding intellectual and emotional support, and for your belief in us, I thank you.

## **Acronyms and abbreviations**

ACSA – Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act

AMS – Association of Muslim Schools

AMSS – Association of Muslim Social Scientists

BASA – Black and Asian Studies Association

BCM – Bradford Council of Mosques

BHA – British Humanists Association

BNP – British National Party

CBMI – Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia

CDA – Crime and Disorder Act

CMEB – Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain

CPS – Crown Prosecution Service

COIC – Commission on Integration and Social Cohesion

CUKC – Citizen of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth

CRE – Commission for Racial Equality

DfES – Department for Education and Skills

DLA – Discrimination Law Association

DLR – Discrimination Law Review

EC – European Commission

ECHR - European Convention on Human Rights

EOC – Equal Opportunities Commission

EOEC - Equal Opportunity Employment Commission

EHRC – Equalities and Human Rights Commission

EU – European Union



**FAIR – Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism**

**HPG – Humanist Philosophers’ Group**

**HRA - Human Rights Act**

**IHRC – Islamic Human Rights Commission**

**IST – Islamic Schools Trust**

**IWA – Indian Workers’ Association**

**JBG – Jewish Board of Guardians**

**JFS – Jewish Free Schools**

**LEA – Local Education Authority**

**MAB – Muslim Association of Britain**

**MCB – Muslim Council of Britain**

**MSD – Master Slave Dialectic**

**NSS – National Secular Society**

**OfSTED – Office for Standards in Education**

**ONS – Office for National Statistics**

**PIU – Performance Innovation Unit**

**POA – Public Order Act**

**PWA – Pakistani Workers’ Association**

**QCA – Qualifications and Curriculum Authority**

**REC – Race Equality Council**

**RRA – Race Relations Act**

**RRB – Race Relations Board**

**TGWU – Transport and General Workers Union**

**UKACIA – UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs**

**VA – Voluntary Aided**



VC – Voluntary Controlled

WISC – West Indian Standing Conference

Muslim women are caricatured as oppressed victims who need rescuing from their controlling men, while at the same time being accused of threatening an overly tolerant majority. Thus Allison Pearson describes the wearing of the veil as “downright intimidating” because she feels “judged for wearing my own clothes in my own country”. Yes, precisely.

Salma Yaqoob.

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Sinead O'Connor.

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# Chapter One

## Citizenship and double consciousness – Muslims and multiculturalism in Britain

Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter round it... To the real question, how does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word. [...] It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.

Du Bois, *Of Our Spiritual Strivings* (1903).

### 1. Introduction

With these words the activist and scholar William Edward Burghart Du Bois (b.1868-1963) unveiled his idea of 'double-consciousness'. This is an idea borne from a concern with reciprocal moral obligations within a national community, and focuses mainly upon the racialised existence of early twentieth century African-Americans. At its very core it contains the view that minorities will possess an impaired civic status if the terms of incorporation ignore their sensibilities.<sup>1</sup> This is because they will be prevented from participating in the social and political life of their society in a manner that affords them equal opportunity, dignity and confidence; diminishing their citizenship and giving rise to the 'peculiar sensation' that they are indeed 'a problem'.

More than a century has passed since Du Bois delineated these thoughts in his essay *Of Our Spiritual Strivings* (1903), and this thesis argues that, in its fullness, his ideas cast light

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<sup>1</sup> Ideas of minority and majority groupings are problematised throughout this thesis not least with reference to debates concerning essentialism and reification (chp. 2 sec. 2.2, chp. 3 sec. 3.10-3.12) and attributed or self-defined categories (chp. 3 sec. 3.6 and sec. 3.8.1). The term minority group is used here to denote a sizable and/or politically significant collectivity or community of people who share a distinctive cultural identity, differing from that of a majority or mainstream in the state. The sense of belonging and loyalty among minorities might result from their sharing one or several of the following characteristics: a distinctive language, religion, nationality, ethnicity, history, racial experience or set of cultural traditions, values, lifestyles, or other defining characteristics that have significantly impacted upon their lives and helped to define their identity, in both their and other people's perception. The element of perceived group membership is crucial here for - as is discussed in chapter three and chapter five (chp. 5 sec. 2.2/3 and sec. 3) - the sense of belonging and loyalty among a minority might simultaneously result from the experience of discrimination, prejudice or hostility directed toward their real or alleged possession of such characteristics. Du Bois demonstrates a keen awareness of these issues which are considered in the next chapter (chp. 2 sec. 3.1-3.2) and in chapter three.



upon present debates concerning Muslims and multiculturalism in Britain. There are several reasons why this might be the case. One reason stems from the increasing recognition that Du Bois comprises a 'founding figure' of sociology (Young, Jr., Watts, Marable, Lemert, and Higginbotham, 2007; Gates, 2007; Gates and Oliver, 1999; Bell, Grosholz and Stewart, 1996; Lemert, 1994).<sup>2</sup> As such we are required to take seriously a thinker whose work has so profoundly impacted upon the topics of difference and citizenship in the way that one might, for example, refer to Marx, Weber or Durkheim in an analysis of social class, status or solidarity (Zuckerman, 2004). More specifically, and as chapter two details, Du Bois bequeaths a rich body of theory and analysis concerning social-formations that strive for 'inclusion' without 'assimilation'. That is, the way in which minorities themselves seek incorporation into the mainstream in a manner appreciative of, and not closed to, their differences, interests and concerns (see chp 2. sec 4.). This is a body of work that has had an enormous influence upon American conceptions of race<sup>3</sup> and difference (Bell, Grosholz and Stewart, 1996). Since these American conceptions have often very directly impacted upon British race-relations paradigms, as chapters three and five demonstrate, it might be argued that Du Bois has already made an indirect contribution to the British debate which invites explicit inquiry. These rationales do not on their own, however, provide the basis for turning to Du Bois in this thesis.

It is argued that the most compelling reason to turn to Du Bois is because the Du Boisian cannon includes a theorisation of forms of 'consciousness' that may underpin social formations that emerge both *in* and *for* themselves. This describes the movement from a

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<sup>2</sup> For example, in 2006 a group of sociologists led a successful campaign to rename the American Sociological Association's (ASA) highest award, the Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award, after Du Bois. See Morris (2007).

<sup>3</sup> The *idea* of race is vigorously debated throughout this thesis (especially in chp 3). Whilst it would be easy to state at the beginning that the term is used under 'erasure' (Derrida, 1976) or rejected outright in the manner preferred by Miles (1989) (and as discussed in chp3, sec 4), it will instead be argued that many social and political categories including ethnicity, age, gender and class are unstable and contested; subject to potential reification and essentialism, and that the implication of 'race' as 'real' is therefore dismissed at the outset. It is argued that race should be understood as a social construction that nevertheless serves as a potential vehicle for subjective and attributed identifications. Rather than offering a post-race account (St. Louis, 2002; Gilroy, 2000), therefore, this thesis will make the argument for a widening of racial equality agendas to include those affected by the *social reality* of race. The implication this holds in conceptualising racism and race-relations are critically examined in chapters three and five.

consciousness that is derived from the treatment of a dominant party, existing *in* itself and bearing a **historically ascribed identity**, to a consciousness that is capable of mobilising on its own terms for its own interests, and emerges *for* itself in **adopting a politically self-defined identity**. It is argued that Du Bois is uniquely suited to this study because this thesis investigates the types of consciousness that are presently informing Muslim mobilisations and identity related claims-making in Britain. These are referred to by the term ‘Muslim-consciousness’. What this means is set out fully in chapter three, following an explanation in chapter two of Du Bosian conceptions of consciousness, but the term Muslim-consciousness is used here to denote the advent of increasingly salient Muslim identities that are adopted and deployed in various permutations by many Muslims themselves.

- **The question the thesis examines is how Muslim-consciousness connects to the sorts of ‘civic status’ that Muslims in Britain are seeking.**

The types of ‘civic status’ referred to here include those that have prevailed for other minorities under the terms of a peculiarly British multiculturalism (sec. 1.3). This is a tradition that has sought to promote equality of access and opportunity, and has led to some significant recognition of certain minority ‘differences’. One of the aims of this introductory chapter is to spell out the scope of the civic status that this tradition has – and continues to – accord, and where Muslim minorities who are seeking specific accommodations of their differences fit into this tradition.

- **This is theoretically explored below, and in chapters two and three, and then empirically pursued through multi-method case studies examining salient Muslim mobilisations for the state funding of Muslim schools in chapter four, and legislation to protect Muslims from discrimination in chapter five.**

To this end, it is argued that a focus upon Muslim-consciousness within and amongst some Muslim communities themselves, alongside the way in which this consciousness is understood politically – at an official governmental level as well as discursively in the public and media commentary examined in chapter six - allows us to capture: (a) the political



dimension in which Muslim-consciousness is formed; (b) the nature and content of this consciousness *in* and *for* itself; alongside (c) the transformative potential it heralds for society as a whole.

### **1.1. Contested civic-status**

Implicit in this schema is a view that Muslim minorities can strive for political recognition and incorporation through a contestation of their allocated civic status. Indeed, it is a sign of our times that it feels somewhat clichéd to state that minority claims-making has increasingly ‘challenged’ traditional conceptions of the civic status that various minorities are granted by programmes of democratic citizenship. As Gutmann (1994: 3) declared over a decade ago, “it is hard to find a democratic or democratising society these days that is not the site of some significant controversy over whether and how its institutions should better recognize the identities of cultural and disadvantaged minorities”. Whether these challenges have contested the separation of public and private spheres (Fraser, 1991), reconfigured the constituents of incorporation in the country’s representation of itself (Young, 1989, 1990), or struggled for concessions in what might commonly be mistaken as mundane calls for dietary or school and work uniform changes (Parekh, 1994), what they all share in common is the view that conceptions of civic status cannot ignore the internal plurality of societies that play host to ‘difference’.

Another way of putting this is to state that whilst citizenship takes a legal form, it also operates socially through the reciprocal balance of rights and responsibilities that confer upon its bearers a civic status that affords those bearers equal opportunity, dignity and confidence. As such it represents a field in which “political and social rights, and cultural obligations [can be] contested by collective action” (Statham, 1999: 599). Collective action is not here limited to ‘direct action’ as much as the continual negotiations entered upon under the rubric of a meta-membership that, in Tilly’s terms (1997: 600), designates “a set of mutually enforceable claims relating categories of persons to agents of governments”.

Whilst it may indeed be a sign of our times, and in both resembling *and* deviating from T. H. Marshall's famous conceptualisation of citizenship as both a *right* and a *duty*, it is nevertheless true that a focus upon inclusion through contestation is a relatively recent development in accounts of citizenship and civic status. Of course in his landmark essay, *Citizenship and Social Class* (1997 [1950]), Marshall argued that the central feature of citizenship should be "a status bestowed on all those who are full members of the community" (1997 [1950]: 300). The community he imagined, however, largely assumed a broadly homogeneous nation-state polity (discussed below) in which the prospect of membership through citizenship undoubtedly heralded an increase in the rights enjoined by all. For example, Marshall identified a tripartite taxonomy of citizenship made up of the civil, the political and the social. Whilst the civil element was composed of "rights necessary for individual freedom — liberty of the person, freedom of speech...the right to own property and conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice" (1997: 294), the political referred to an extension of the franchise and the "right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body" (ibid). The third social element described a "right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share in the full social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society" (ibid.).

It is arguable that the provenance for Marshall's progressive formulations lay in the philosophical conceptions of John Stuart Mill, the 'new Liberals' T. H. Green and L. T. Hobhouse, and economists such as Alfred Marshall and John Maynard Keynes, amongst others. This is because these thinkers contributed to the idea that citizenship should constitute a positive freedom that would supplement the minimum of 'Life, Liberty, and Property' that had been advocated since at least the seventeenth century by classical liberals who

[s]aw such rights as limited, for the most part opposing even the public provision of education, under the period of the welfare state the entitlement to membership and participation also came to embody rights to work, to health, and to security. As such, *a universal citizenship* expressed the new positive role of the state as the embodiment of social democracy (Olsenn, 2004: 180 emphasis added).

Thus, and whilst his conception of citizenship was a relative advance that marked an important progress upon earlier settlements, Marshall's conception of citizenship embodied a central axiom of liberalism to be found in its singularity or 'universalism'.

Criticisms of this tendency have been mounted from various quarters, not least in recent years from those engaged in the "multicultural turn" (May, Modood and Squires, 2004: 1-19). Authors from this tradition have argued that one problem with the liberal conception of universal citizenship, is that it is blind to the injustices that might arise from treating people marked by social, cultural and political differences in a uniform manner. As Squires (2002: 117) has argued, however, it is essential to distinguish this complaint from a rejection of universal social and political inclusion per se, for what is being advocated is "a differentiated universalism as opposed to the false universalism of traditional citizenship theory."

## 1.2. Nation-state citizenship

Indeed, at the root of another complaint is that Marshallian style traditional citizenship theory proceeds from a view of a national community, prevalent since the mid-seventeenth century in Europe at least, in which "the individual enjoys the rights associated with citizenship because she or he belongs to a political community defined as a nation – the nation-state" (Martinello, 2002: 117).<sup>4</sup> The critique of Marshall, and the question pertinent to this thesis, is not so much *who* makes up the nation part of this citizenship equation as much as *whether* there is a tendency for some people to be left out of its construction. For example, according to Walzer (1997: 25) it is indeed the case that the 'nation' results from "a single dominant group [that] organises the common life in a way that reflects its own authority and culture". This is a source of concern amongst scholars who have argued that minorities will "feel crucially left out [when] the majority understand the polity as an expression of their

---

<sup>4</sup> Any comprehensive account of citizenship and civic status would of course visit ancient Athens and the Platonic concern with unity through friendship, characterised as "the quality of respect for others and a sense of justice, so as to bring order into our cities and create a bond of friendship and union" (Plato, 1987: 54), even if the Aristotelian imperative of defending conviviality against external threats was more common. See Sayyid (2005) for an interesting discussion of Greek city state citizenship. What is of most relevance to this discussion, however, is the modern citizenship fashioned not around city states but around nation-states, as discussed above.



nation, or agreed purpose, whatever it may be” (Taylor, 2001: 123). To be sure, much of what is encapsulated in the idea of ‘multiculturalism’ raises this concern and critiques “the myth of homogeneous and monocultural nation-states” when it advocates the right of minority “cultural maintenance and community formation, linking these to social equality and protection from discrimination” (Castles, 2000: 5).

Another persistent and related charge surrounds the extent to which the non-private ‘civic’ realm represents the particular communal interests and values of a dominant group, as if these were (or ought to be) equally held by all. As chapter two demonstrates (sec 4-4.4), multicultural theorists unite in their conviction that a blanket reliance on difference-blind individual rights cannot sufficiently register the injustices of an inevitable state partiality, contained in such things as public institutions, which favour majority cultural norms. Hence Taylor (1994: 43-4) characterises the “supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles” that are sometimes said to underpin public institutions as reflecting “one hegemonic culture... a particularism masquerading as the universal.” These can include those principles that inform a society’s laws, its values and dominant practices, and which are presented as the natural order of things when in fact they are an extension of the majority group’s culture. This is an ever present tendency, according to Morris (1997: 194), because the Westphalian European nation-state has

grown up around an ‘ideal’ of cultural homogeneity, established and reinforced through the state controlled acquisition of literate culture, alongside state control over entry and the acquisitions of citizenship: thus the nation represents territorialized cultural belonging, while the state formalises and controls legal membership.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, the nation-state can embody an enlightenment urge to reduce differences to unity, and an outcome of this is that “[dominant] group related experiences, points of view, or cultural assumptions will tend to become the norm biasing the standards and procedures of achievement and inclusion that govern social, political and economic institutions” (Young,

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<sup>5</sup> As Smith (1995: 99) has also argued: “Modern nations are simultaneously and necessarily civic and ethnic. In relation to the national state, the individual is a citizen with civic rights and duties, and receives the benefits of modernity through the medium of an impersonal, and impartial, bureaucracy”.



1993: 133). The result - characterised by Billig (1995: 17) as a 'banal nationalism' - is likely to be "overlooked, forgotten or theoretically denied", leaving the minority

...experiencing oneself as invisible at the same time that one is marked out as different. The invisibility comes about when dominant groups fail to recognize the perspective embodied in their cultural expressions as a perspective. These dominant cultural expressions often have little place for the experience of other groups, at most only mentioning or referring to them in stereotyped or marginalized ways (Young, 1990: 60).

In the language of Du Bois, this kind of civic status confers upon minorities a sort of *veil* from behind which they must look out at dominant society, whilst those in front of it do not see the minority as full and legitimate co-members of their polity. That is, institutions and social practices attribute minority status to some inherent qualities in the minority group, as if those qualities were the *reason* that rather than the *rationalization* for neither recognizing their presence nor taking their sensibilities into account.

In this sense, and as discussed in the following chapter, Du Bois presents an inverted version of the early Rawlsian thought experiment of placing a 'choosing subject' behind 'a veil of ignorance' in an effort to ascertain unbiased propositions of human interest. In Du Bois' terms, minorities look out from behind their *veil* in full knowledge of critical aspects of their identity, and they see the majority through it, whilst the latter sees only a reflection of their own mastery or dominance (chp. 2 sec. 3-3.2). For Du Bois, therefore, conceptions of citizenship that proceed through an unequivocal universalism, based upon the insistence that everybody can access the formal rights theoretically conferred by membership to a polity, diminish the citizenship of minorities if their particularities are not recognised and supported within the terms of incorporation. This is because, and in agreement with some communitarians considered in chapter two (sec 4-4.4), he argues that a singular and categorical notion of citizenship abstracts individuals from their context and ignores the importance of their 'cultural strivings' motivated by forms of consciousness *in themselves*. These 'cultural strivings' may seek to attend to a devalued starting position or feelings of neglect in an effort to negate the 'peculiar sensation' that they are 'a problem', or they may

seek to merge what he called the ‘double self’ into a ‘better truer self’ as synthesised or hyphenated identities (chp. 2 sec. 4).

### 1.3. British multicultural citizenship

These rather abstract ideas are not entirely alien to a British policy context that has sought to remove barriers and contest stigmas that disadvantage ethnic and racial minorities. For example, post-war migrants who arrived as Citizens of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth (CUKC)<sup>6</sup>, and subsequent British born generations, have been recognised as ethnic and racial minorities requiring state support and differential treatment to overcome obstacles in their exercise of citizenship to prevent, minimise and redress an impairment of their civic status. This includes how, under the remit of several Race-Relations Acts (RRAs) the state has sought to integrate minorities into the labour market and other key arenas of British society through an approach that has promoted equal access as an example of equality of opportunity (Lester, 1998). Indeed, and as discussed in chapters three (sec. 3-3.2) and five (sec. 2.1-2.3), it is now over thirty years since the introduction of a third Race-Relations Act (1976) cemented a state sponsorship of Race Equality by consolidating – and cumulatively building upon - earlier, weaker legislative instruments (RRA 1965 & 1968). Alongside its broad remit spanning public and private institutions; recognition of *indirect* discrimination and the later imposition of a statutory public duty to promote ‘good race-relations’, it also created the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) to assist individual complainants and

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<sup>6</sup> The story of post-war Commonwealth Migration to Britain has been told extensively elsewhere (see Hiro (1991) for a well documented general survey and Ansari (2004) for a specific focus upon Muslim migrants to Britain). Since it is not central to this thesis it will not be discussed at length here. One point of interest for our discussion, however, is the impact of the introduction of Britain’s first immigration legislation, since the 1905 Aliens Act, in the form of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. This Act and the hastily passed 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act (designed to prevent the entry of Kenyan and other African-Asians holding British citizenship) together conversely *accelerated* commonwealth immigration during this period. Whilst the knowledge of the impending 1962 Act led to a movement of mainly male migration which sought to ‘beat the ban’, there is evidence to suggest that the migratory impulse for family unification arose from an anticipated total ban on immigration (Shukra, 1998). Areas of particular Muslim settlement were focused around older, industrial towns where the initial wave of male labourers had arrived to take up work. Outside London these areas included both East & West Midlands (Blackburn; Leicester; Birmingham) South & West Yorkshire (Sheffield; Leeds; Dewsbury; Bradford) and Greater Manchester (including Oldham and Burnley). See Appendices I and II.



monitor the implementation of the Act (see Dhami, Squires and Modood, 2006: 19-25 and chapter 5 sec. 2.1).

This is an example, according to Joppke (1999: 642), of a citizenship that has amounted to “a precarious balance between citizenship universalism and racial group particularism [that] stops short of giving special group rights to immigrants.”<sup>7</sup> What it also suggests is that the institutionalisation of a space from which to begin to redress racially structured barriers to participation represents a defining characteristic in the British approach to integrating minorities. But does this amount to a multicultural citizenship? The answer is that it amounts to a British multicultural citizenship for, although the UK lacks an official ‘Multiculturalism Act’ or ‘Charter’ in the way of Australia or Canada (Commission in Multi-Ethnic Britain (CMEB), 2000), the idea of minority integration being premised upon a drive for unity through an uncompromising cultural ‘assimilation’ was something consciously rejected over 40 years ago. This is when the then Labour home secretary Roy Jenkins’ (1966) defined integration as “not a flattening process of assimilation but equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance”. In seeking to combat racial discrimination, this state sponsorship of Racial Equality has been accompanied by a form of cultural pluralism that has recognised and protected some religious minorities from all the barriers encountered by racial discrimination, and this is discussed in chapters three and five.

#### **1.4. Local multicultural citizenship**

Alongside this state centred, “unmistakeably national” (Joppke, 1999: 146) focus, there is also a tradition of what we might characterise as ‘municipal drift’ where multiculturalist discourses and policies have been pursued through local councils and municipal authorities, making up a patchwork of British multiculturalism summarised by Singh (2005: 170)

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<sup>7</sup> This is a valid assessment despite the very problematic nature of Joppke’s conflation of equality of opportunity as equality of outcome which he characterises as an example of Affirmative Action (see Joppke, 1999: footnote 26). The Race-Relations Act does *not* allow positive discrimination or affirmative action. This means that an employer cannot try to change the balance of the workforce by selecting someone mainly because she or he is from a particular racial group. This would be discrimination on racial grounds, and unlawful (see Karim, 2004/5). What in the US is called ‘affirmative action’ goes well beyond what is lawful in Britain.

Historically, multiculturalism as a public policy in Britain has been heavily localised, often made voluntary, and linked essentially to issues of managing diversity in areas of immigrant settlement. The legislative framework on which this policy is based – for example, the Race Relations Acts (1965 and 1976) – recognised this contingency, giving additional resources to local authorities as well as new powers to better promote racial and ethnic equality. With these enabling powers, most local authorities with large ethnic minority populations have transformed themselves from initially being the bastions of official racism to being promoters of anti-racism and multiculturalism, and with this change the strength of local ethnic communities and coalitions have been instrumental.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps the best example of Singh's assessment of local multiculturalism is captured by the programmes of anti-racist education (Tronya, 1987; Mullard, 1985) and multicultural education (Swann Committee, 1985) that have historically been enacted at the Local Education Authority (LEA) level.<sup>9</sup> As chapter six (sec. 6) details, LEAs are responsible for education within the jurisdiction of county councils and metropolitan boroughs, and this includes responsibility for all state schools excluding those that are afforded 'voluntary aided status' (and can therefore opt out) under the terms of the 1944 Education Act. In many multi-ethnic urban areas, LEAs have actively encouraged anti-racist and multicultural initiatives in the face of – and at the cost of – some vociferous opposition (Hewer, 2001), that has in turn informed the national picture. Indeed, it was through the debates at the local level that one of the leading public policy documents on multiculturalism from an inquiry into multicultural education, *Education for All*,<sup>10</sup> the Swann Report (1985: 36) characterised British multicultural citizenship as enabling

...all ethnic groups, both minority and majority, to participate in fully shaping society...whilst also allowing, and where necessary assisting the ethnic minority communities in maintaining their distinct ethnic identities within a framework of commonly accepted values.

It is important to understand this past policy and discourse in British multiculturalism because it is currently alleged to be facing a 'crisis', one that is purportedly precipitated by the

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<sup>8</sup> This could be an example of the way in which Banting and Kymlicka (2007: 6) argue that "multiculturalism has become deeply embedded in the legislation, jurisprudence, and institutions of many Western countries and indeed their self-image".

<sup>9</sup> Assisted by section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 which afforded local authorities additional funds to support the presence of significant numbers of minorities requiring language and other access assistance.

<sup>10</sup> See Verma (1988) for a critical evaluation of the Swann Report.



exceptionality of “culturally unreasonable or theologically alien demands” put forward by Britain’s Muslims (Modood: 2006: 37).

### 1.5. A multicultural crisis of Muslim exceptionality?

This crisis is epitomised in the work of prominent centre-Left commentators such as David Goodhart (2004) and his widely disseminated essay ‘Too Diverse?’ Invoking a monocultural-nationalism, Goodhart has openly argued that “we feel more comfortable with, and are readier to share with and sacrifice for, those with whom we have shared histories and similar values. To put it bluntly - most of us prefer our own kind.”<sup>11</sup> To this we could add the comments of Trevor Phillips, previously Chair of the CRE and current head of the newly forming Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) (see chp 5 sec 4.5), who has famously stated that Britain should “kill off multiculturalism” because it “suggests separateness” (quoted in *The Times*, 3 April, 2004). More recently and, some might suggest, more predictably, Goodhart and Philips’ views have been re-deployed by the centre-Right Conservative Party leader, David Cameron, who has characterised British multiculturalism as a “barrier” dividing British society (Cameron, 30 January 2007).

Whilst much stronger and vitriolic critique is not unusual from a centre-Right in Britain that has historically lamented and contested governmental interventions recognising the diversity of minority populations<sup>12</sup>, opposition to the recognition and support of minority cultural practices in Britain has undoubtedly had a qualitatively greater impact since it was joined by “the pluralistic centre-left [and] articulated by people who previously rejected

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<sup>11</sup> Another example includes John Sentamu, the first non-white Archbishop of York, who stated that “multiculturalism has seemed to imply, wrongly for me, let other cultures be allowed to express themselves but do not let the majority culture at all tell us its glories, its struggles, its joys, its pains” (quoted in *The Times*, 22 November, 2005). Bryan Appleyard of the liberal-conservative *Sunday Times*, meanwhile, announced that “Multiculturalism is dead. It had it coming. An ideology that defined a nation as a series of discrete cultural and political entities that were each free to opt out of any or all common orthodoxies was never a serious contender in the Miss Best Political System pageant” (17 December, 2006). All of these ideas are discussed in section 1.6.

<sup>12</sup> Particularly the allocation of public provisions for minority cultural practices on the grounds that these deviate from a core “majority” national identity to which minorities are required to assimilate. A good example of this view can be found in *The Salisbury Review*, a conservative magazine that was founded in 1982 with the influential conservative philosopher Roger Scruton as its editor. Its incendiary role in what became known as the Honneyford Affair provides an excellent case study of the main political argumentation contained within this position. See Halstead (1988).

polarising models of race and class and were sympathetic to the ‘rainbow’, coalitional politics of identity” (Modood, 2005a).<sup>13</sup>

It is equally important to note, however, that the view that multicultural inclusion would prove problematic for - and with - Muslims is one that has existed for a little longer than recent criticism might suggest. For example, according to Favell (1998: 38), ever since the onset of the Satanic Verses affair “one of the hottest issues thrown up by multiculturalism in Britain has been the growing significance of political and social issues involving Muslims.” To be sure, the publication of a novel by Salman Rushdie which disparaged both the genesis of Islam and the biography of the Prophet Mohammed gave rise to a great deal of anger expressed by British Muslims who felt that, “as citizens they [were no less] entitled to equality of treatment and respect for their customs and religion” (Anwar, 1992: 9) than either the Christian majority denominations or other religious minorities.<sup>14</sup> Explored in relation to ascribed and self-defined identities in chapter three (sec 8-8.1) this episode highlighted the lack of political space and public sympathy experienced by Muslim minorities. As Modood argued

Is not the reaction to *The Satanic Verses* an indication that the honour of the Prophet or the *imani ghairat* [attachment to and love of the faith] as central to the Muslim psyche as the Holocaust and racial slavery to others? [...] Muslims will argue that, historically, vilification of the Prophet and of their faith is central to how the West has expressed hatred for them and has led to violence and expulsion on a large scale (2005 [1993]: 121, 122).

In describing a European trend, Parekh (2006) has characterised these sorts of issues as the ‘Muslim question’ i.e. the norms and values of a democratic culture that does or does not

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<sup>13</sup> As one commentator has put it, “the old alliance with the centre-left is fraying to breaking point; old allies in the battles against racism have jumped sides, and now routinely present arguments more Islamophobic than the centre-right” (Bunting, *The Guardian*, 27 February, 2006). See Meer (2006) (included as appendix III) for a typology of recent convergences between Right and Left intellectuals on matters pertaining to multiculturalism in general and Muslims in particular.

<sup>14</sup> For example, the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) tried but failed to prosecute Salman Rushdie for blasphemy under existing common law offences. Part of the reason for this failure was that Islam, unlike Christianity, is not recognised within blasphemy legislation (in 1977 the editor of *Gay News* was sentenced to six months in prison for publishing a poem that characterised Jesus Christ as homosexual). Other reasons include the dwindling socio-legal importance attributed to the charge of blasphemy. Nonetheless, the question of parity was an important issue during the Satanic Verses Affair and re-emerges with the examples of anti-discrimination and incitement to religious hatred legislation that are examined in chapter five.



recognise some Muslim sensitivities, which has been described elsewhere as “the nut that Europe has to crack” (Joppke, 1998: 37).<sup>15</sup>

A more recent articulation of the view that Muslims are an exceptional and problematic minority, however, can be found in the ‘parallel lives’ thesis (Cantle, 2001) that followed the inquiry into civil unrest and ‘rioting’ that took place in some northern towns, home to both small and large numbers of Muslims (Shukra, Back, Keith, Khan and Solomos, 2004). In charging Muslim communities with self-segregation and adoption of isolationist practices under a pretence of multiculturalism (see Hussain and Bagguley, 2005), the Ouseley report (2001) pioneered an approach found in other post-riot accounts (cf Ritchie, 2001; Clarke, 2001; Cantle, 2001).<sup>16</sup> This included its likening of Muslim settlement patterns to those of ‘colonists’ (Wainwright, 2001) and which provided many influential commentators with the license, not always supported by the specific substance of each report, to critique Muslim distinctiveness in particular and multiculturalism in general.<sup>17</sup>

As the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, has recognised, the centrality of British-Muslims to these debates has meant that discussion of multiculturalism in Britain has a tendency to reflect “a coded way of talking about one kind of perception of Islamic groups in Britain” (Williams, 13 May, 2007). This is exemplified by the way in which visible Muslim practices such as veiling have, in all their variety, been reduced to and conflated with alleged Muslim practices such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation, a rejection of positive law in favour of *shar’ia* law and so on (see chp 4 sec 4.1-4.2). Each of these suggests a radical ‘otherness’ about Muslims and an illiberality about multiculturalism. Since

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<sup>15</sup> The similarities with the ‘Jewish question’ are discussed in chapter four (see 4.1-4.2) and elsewhere in Meer and Noorani (forthcoming).

<sup>16</sup> At the same time, and once it was established in the public mind that young Muslims and communities were the protagonists being discussed, the official documents themselves did not always *explicitly* state this and so therefore used more universalistic language. I am grateful to Varun Uberoi for this point.

<sup>17</sup> For example, even a sympathetic commentator such as Jocelyne Cesari (2004: 23-4) inaccurately concluded that “[w]hether in the areas of housing, employment, schooling or social services, the report describes an England segregated according to the twin categories of race and religion.” More popular characterisations of this view in public and media discourse are explored in chapter six (4.1-4.2).



the latter is alleged to license these practices, opposition to the practice, therefore, it is argued, necessarily invalidates the policy.<sup>18</sup>

To this we could add that not only has Muslim claims-making appeared unreasonable, but that the acts of terrorism undertaken by protagonists proclaiming a Muslim agenda have, according to one commentator, led “British public opinion to be agreed on one thing: that British multiculturalism is dead and militant Islam...killed it off” (Singh, 2005: 157).<sup>19</sup> In linking the diversity and the anti-terrorism agendas, then, British multiculturalism has been implicated as the culprit of our security woes and this has fuelled the securitisation of ethnic relations. For example, whilst it is not quite the case, as Fekete (2004: 25) has suggested, that public policy solutions aimed at managing ethnic and religious diversity currently amount to being “tough on mosques, tough on the causes of mosques”, it is certainly now more common to find statements such as that made by the Communities Secretary Ruth Kelly, that it is a requirement for Muslim organisations to take “a proactive leadership role in tackling extremism and defending our shared values” (11 October, 2006). To this end the government recently made available five million pounds to help local authorities monitor “Islamic extremists” with local councils acting as “the eyes and ears for the police in countering threats” (Blackman, 7 January, 2006). To this we might also add recent calls from the outgoing head of MI5, Dame Eliza Mannigham-Buller, for the police to develop a network of Muslim spies who could provide intelligence on their co-religionists (Evans and Ford, 9 July 2007). This suggestion follows the disclosure that several British intelligence agencies have

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<sup>18</sup> Evidenced not only in the public and media discourse examined in chapter six but also by academics and intellectuals including Christian Joppke. Writing in the *British Journal of Sociology* he states: “Certain minority practices, on which, so far, no one had dared to comment, have now become subjected to public scrutiny as never before. The notorious example is that of arranged marriage which, to an alarming degree, *seems to be* forced marriage” (2004: 251 emphasis added). Whilst this is an important issue that must never be ignored nor silenced, on what evidence Joppke’s assumptions are based remains undisclosed in the rest of the article. Whilst the conflation between ‘forced’ and ‘arranged’ marriages is unfortunate and misleading, the suggestion that no one has dared to comment on either betrays a surprising unfamiliarity with a British case in which pressure groups and organisations such as Southall Black Sisters and Women Against Fundamentalism (WAF) have led high profile national campaigns, and governmental strategies such as the Working Group on Forced Marriage are operating.

<sup>19</sup> That this view may already have been held by some legislators is evidenced when Labour MP Tony Wright, commenting on Muslim faith schooling, stated that “[b]efore September 11 it looked like a bad idea, it now looks like a mad idea”. BBC News, 22/11/2001 available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/1670704.stm>

monitored over 100,000 British-Muslims making the pilgrimage to Mecca (Leppard, 21 January, 2007), alongside an unpopular attempt by the DfES to encourage universities to report 'Asian-looking' students suspected of involvement in 'Islamic political radicalism' (see Dodd, 16 October, 2006).

### 1.6. A selective retreat?

Having been celebrated as "unique in Europe" (Statham, 2003: 123) and once recognised as an approach that "has not stood in the way of successful integration" (Joppke, 1999: 644), to what extent is it then true to say that the normative policy rhetoric from a few years ago, which was in favour of multiculturalism, has since shifted? Assuming for a moment that this is the case, one way a 'shift' might be characterised is as a move from a perceived *neglect* to *affirmation* of British identity, presented as the meta-community to which all must subscribe. For example, the government endorsed report entitled 'A Journey to Citizenship' (2005: 15), chaired by Sir Bernard Crick, states that

To be British seems to us to mean that we respect the laws, the elected parliamentary and democratic political structures, traditional values of mutual tolerance, respect for equal rights and mutual concern; and that we give our allegiance to the state (as commonly symbolised in the Crown)... To be British is to respect those over-arching specific institutions, values, beliefs and traditions that bind us all, the different nations and cultures together in peace and in a legal order. [...] So to be British does not mean assimilation into a common culture so that original identities are lost.

Similarly, while the aforementioned Cantle report (2001: 10) argues for a "greater sense of citizenship" informed by "common elements of 'nation-hood' [including] the use of the English language" (ibid.19), it equally stresses that "we are never going to turn the clock back to what was perceived to be a dominant or monoculturalist view of nationality" (ibid. 18), and its lead author has elsewhere pleaded: "let's not just throw out the concept of multiculturalism; let's update it and move it to a more sophisticated and developed approach" (Cantle, 2006: 91). To this we could add the conclusions of the Home Office sponsored Denham Report (2002: 20) which stressed that "our society is multicultural, and it is shaped by the interaction between people of diverse cultures. There is no single dominant and unchanging culture into which all must assimilate". Indeed, Tony Blair's most recent speech



on the topic presents this affirmation in a strong ‘civic’ sense before endorsing an ‘ideal’ of multicultural Britain that is worth quoting at length:

...when it comes to our essential values - belief in democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, equal treatment for all, respect for this country and its shared heritage - then that is where we come together, it is what we hold in common; it is what gives us the right to call ourselves British. [...] The whole point is that multicultural Britain was never supposed to be a celebration of division; but of diversity. The purpose was to allow people to live harmoniously together, despite their difference; not to make their difference an encouragement to discord. The values that nurtured it were those of solidarity, of coming together, of peaceful co-existence. The right to be in a multicultural society was always, always implicitly balanced by a duty to integrate, to be part of Britain, to be British and Asian, British and black, British and white. [...] So it is not that we need to dispense with multicultural Britain. On the contrary we should continue celebrating it (Blair, 8 December 2006).

An insight into Blair’s thinking can be found in the earlier White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* (2002) which proposes measures, following the Cante recommendations, that included swearing a US style oath of allegiance at naturalisation ceremonies, an English language proficiency requirement when seeking citizenship, as well as the Crick Report’s (2005) recommendations for citizenship education in Schools. Meanwhile, the Government’s current strategy for Race Equality and community cohesion, *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* (Home Office, 2005: 42) states that:

Fundamentally, national cohesion rests on an inclusive sense of Britishness which couples the offer of fair, mutual support – from security to health to education – with the expectation that people will play their part in society and respect others.

The follow-up: *One year on – A progress summary* (Home Office, 2006), reiterates its two key aims as: “achieving equality between different races; and developing a better sense of community cohesion by helping people from different backgrounds to have a stronger sense of ‘togetherness’” (ibid. 1). This includes, for example, “raising the achievement of groups at risk of underperforming i.e. African-Caribbean, Gypsy Traveller, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Turkish and Somali pupils” (ibid. 2). This is meant to contribute to a cohesive community in which “there is a common vision and a sense of belonging; the diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities’ (2006, p. 7). Meanwhile, the Government sponsored Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC) *explicitly* distinguishes its definition of integration from potential assimilatory modes:



Very many of the definitions of cohesion and integration offered in the response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC) consultation spontaneously include a level of concern to distinguish integration from *assimilation*, stressing the importance for true cohesion of accepting – and celebrating – difference. Individual and group *identities* should not be endangered by the process of integration, but rather they should be enriched within both the incoming groups and the host nation. Cohesion implies a society in which differences of culture, race and faith are recognised and accommodated within an overall sense of identity, rather than a single identity, based on a uniform similarity (COIC, Themes and Messages, 2007: 5 original emphasis).

Thus it is still the case, to take an extreme but instructive example, that the British Airport Authority allows its Sikh employees (in all facets of airline duties) to wear the *Kirpan* (a traditional knife with a three inch blade), despite strong opposition from the British Pilots Association (Singh, 2005: 165). Given these sorts of accommodations and evidence of an emphasis upon recognising differences in governmental literature and rhetoric, as well as the polls conducted shortly after 7/7 which reported that “the majority of British people think that multiculturalism makes the country a better place”<sup>20</sup>, how can it be said that multiculturalism has been rejected either in policy or practice?

### 1.7. Missing Muslims in ‘multiculture’?

One explanation might be to point to the very different meanings of multiculturalism. For example, in the above opinion poll it was noted that while 62% of the same survey sample stated that multiculturalism makes the country a better place, 58% declared that people who come to Britain should adopt its values and traditions. Of course this does not necessarily describe a dichotomy, for nuances of both can easily be true of the same type of multiculturalism. It is worth considering, however, the extent to which the poll confirms Giddens suspicion “that much of the debate about multiculturalism in this country is misconceived” (*The Guardian*, 14 October, 2006) and “seems simply to be out of touch with what the concept actually means” (Giddens, 2007: 155). A key misconception may be found in the confusion between ‘communitarian’ and individualistic ‘multiculture’ views of British multiculturalism. The difference between these might be characterised thus: where the former emphasises the ways in which strong ethnic or cultural identities can lead to a meaningful and

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<sup>20</sup> See ‘UK majority back multiculturalism’ BBC 10 August 2005, available <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk/4137990.stm> accessed 13 November 2006.

self-assured integration (Parekh, 2000; Modood, 2005, 2007), the latter stresses the possibilities of life-style identities adopted in an atmosphere of ‘conviviality’ (Gilroy, 2004; Malik, 2007).

Despite the contemporary nature of these distinctions, they have not gone unnoticed in the past. For example, nearly a decade and a half ago Paul Gilroy (1993: 94) asked what it meant if “the political and cultural gains of the emergent black Brits go hand in hand with the further marginalisation of ‘Asians’ in general and Muslims in particular?”. Whilst certain events, not least the Rushdie Affair, had prompted his probing empathy, based upon the evidence of his recent theoretical advocacy of a ‘multiculture’ that does not speak to the marginalisation of Muslims today, his question has not moved him to find a more inclusive formulation. This is particularly so because Gilroy assumes that multiculture, or at least its politics, must be secular in orientation and so prioritises “the process of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life in Britain’s urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere [hoping] an interest in the workings of conviviality will take off from the point where ‘multiculturalism’ broke down” (Gilroy, 2004: xi).

It arguable that this ‘breakdown’ consists of a failure to take up the political claims of Muslims and re-focus instead upon socio-cultural interactions and expressions. More specifically, it takes place along the fault-lines of ‘essentialism’ and ‘reification’ that is felt, certainly by Gilroy and others (including Alexander, 2002), to underpin the conception of multiculturalism presented in the aforementioned CMEB (2000), and elsewhere by writers such as Parekh (2000: 6), in his description of a multicultural society as comprising

...one that includes two or more *cultural communities*. It might respond to its cultural diversity in one of two ways... It might welcome and cherish it...and respect the cultural demands of its constituent communities; or it might seek to assimilate these communities into its mainstream culture either wholly or substantially. In the first case it is multiculturalist and in the second monoculturalist in its orientation and ethos. The term ‘multicultural’ refers to the fact of cultural diversity, the term ‘multiculturalism’ to a normative response to that fact (emphasis added).

What is being argued is that, in their defence of a wholesale rejection of a normative and state sponsored multiculturalism, Gilroy and others have defended only the ‘multiculture’ and not the communitarian version. For it is precisely the sociological and normative conceptions of

community that some 'multiculturalists' are distancing themselves from in the conceptualisation of 'multiculture' as multiculturalism *without groups*. This is for some, though not Gilroy, a less political project. This is apparent in Kenan Malik's (2006\7: 3) statement that "when most people say that multiculturalism is a good thing, they mean the experience of living in a society that is less insular, less homogenous, more vibrant and cosmopolitan than before". Hence his dramatic plea "to separate the idea of diversity as lived experience from that of multiculturalism as a political process", because that latter amounts to a political project that will "seal people into ethnic boxes and police the boundaries" (Malik, 2007: 9, see also Alibhai-Brown, 2001: 47).

As chapter three demonstrates, however, the charge of essentialising and reifying communities into ethnic boxes ignores the ways in which ethnic categories can reflect subjective (and not only objective or externally ascribed) positionings within and between sites of 'boundaries'. These are not unproblematic; can be multiple, and may be informed by common experiences of racism; sexuality; socio-economic positions; geographical locality and so forth (these issues are fully unpacked and explored in chapter three). In this sense, all group categories are socially constructed, but it is clear that people still have a sense of groups (to which, amongst other things, they may feel they belong or are excluded from).

It will be argued that one of the reasons we cannot ignore 'groupist' conceptions of difference is that religious-minorities often see and describe themselves as sharing a 'group' identity through such categories as 'Jewish' or 'Muslim' or 'Sikh' amongst others (this is developed in Meer, 2008). If we accept that these are no less valid than categories of 'working class', 'woman', 'black' or 'youth', it appears inconsistent to reject some groupist categories simply because they are subject to the same dialectical tension between specificity and generality that all group categories are subject to (Modood, 1994). This is not to 'essentialize' or 'reify', however, since the category of 'Jew' or 'Muslim' or 'Sikh' can remain 'as internally diverse as 'Christian' or 'Belgian' or 'middle-class', or any other category helpful in ordering our understanding... [D]iversity does not lead to the abandonment of social concepts in general' (Modood, 2003: 100). This returns us to an



earlier debate examined in Modood's (1998: 378, 379-80) discussion of anti-essentialism and multiculturalism, in which he noted how

...critics have attacked multiculturalism in very similar terms to how multiculturalism attacked nationalism or monoculturalism. The positing of minority or immigrant cultures, which need to be respected, defended, publicly supported and so on, is said to appeal to the view that cultures are discrete, frozen in time, impervious to external influences, homogeneous and without dissent... British anti-essentialists have proposed the ideas of hybridity and of new ethnicities as an alternative to essentialist ethnic identities [which] are not simply 'given', nor are they static or atemporal, and they change (and should change) under new circumstances or by sharing space... Reconciled to multiplicity to an end to itself, its vision of multiculturalism is confined to personal lifestyles and cosmopolitan consumerism and does not extend to the state...

These sorts of hybridity and multiplicity are epitomised by Stuart Hall's (1988; 1991) 'new ethnicities' thesis, and refers to a laissez faire, secular multiculturalism that is less receptive to the recognition of 'groupings' in general, and ethno-religious community identities in particular.<sup>21</sup> This sort of multiculture seeks to engage with the cultural complexities of ethnic identities, specifically their processes of formation and change, which it views as being produced somewhere between an interaction of the local and the global, in which

...the displacement of 'centred' discourses of the West entails putting in question its universalist character and its transcendental claims to speak for everyone, while being itself everywhere and nowhere (Hall, 1996 [1988], p. 169).

Contrast this, for example, with the way in which the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) described its vision of multiculturalism in a submission to the COIC

The MCB's vision is of a multi-faith, pluralistic society with a conscious policy of recognising that people's cultural and faith identities are not simply a private matter, but ones that have public implications. This vision does not imply cultural separatism – the MCB is committed to working for the common good (MCB Briefing Paper January 2007: 2).

It is arguably the case that if the former multiculture view is championed at the expense of accommodations of religious minority identities in general, the impact on Muslims may be particularly negative, no less than a shift toward nationalist civic-assimilationist rhetoric. This is because secularist 'multiculture' has the effect of demarcating "the limits of their

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<sup>21</sup> It is worth noting how Stuart Hall's seminal ideas are open to more than one interpretation. For example, many advocates of 'multiculture' look to Hall as a stimulus but Hall was an author of the 'communitarian' Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain (2000), and has never distanced himself from that report. For a discussion of Hall's ambivalences on some of these points, see Rojek (2003: 178-185).



[Muslims'] expectations for the future extension of special rights and exemptions, as well as perhaps having a demoralising effect because of the stigmatising and stereotypical way it represents them in the public domain" (Statham, 2003: 145). As a replacement, then, to a political multiculturalism, the 'multiculture' approach appears blind to one of greatest challenges presently facing British multiculturalism, i.e., the inclusion of Muslim 'groupings' and accommodations of Muslim claims-making. Two of the most salient examples of this claims-making concern contestations of anti-discrimination legislation and the state sponsorship of Muslim faith-schooling, each of which are explored in chapters five and six, whilst the twin issues of stigma and stereotype in public and media discourses are examined in chapter four. Integral each of these kinds of mobilisations, as well as the experiences of stigma and stereotype, are the forms of consciousness that affect and are affected by them.

## **2. Methodological Issues – reflexivity, rationale, and choice of methods**

Before these forms of consciousness are set out in the next chapter, the following sections will discuss the methodological rationale that informs this thesis, and explain how and why a mixed method case-study approach has been employed. This will begin with a reflexive consideration of the ways in which the current theoretical and empirical work has developed from the initial research proposal. This is an issue that is worth exploring because my interest in undertaking a piece of research where the theorising and researching of dual components of Muslim subjectivities and public and governmental perceptions in tandem, was not built into the initial research proposal. A consideration of the development from research proposal to the actual empirical work detailed in later chapters is perhaps one way of heeding C. Wright-Mills' (1959) advocacy for greater reflection on the development of one's 'sociological imagination', and his invocation to "learn to use our life experience in our intellectual work, continually to examine and interpret it... even if it seems altogether trivial and cheap" (ibid. 196, 207). This is not the same as adopting a narrative self-inquiry methodology (Berger, 2001), however, either as a performative auto-ethnography (Spry, 2001) or as more embedded ethnographic fieldwork (Adler, 1985; Hammersley and Atkinson,

1995). It is simply to recognise that biography and life experience shapes our ontology, and that this inevitably impacts upon our research interests. This might be drawn out by identifying key mediating ‘events’ and obvious thought processes that have affected this transition (Gouldner, 1970).

In charting the development of my research in this way, I owe a partial debt to Claire Alexander’s (2000: 28) ethnographic study entitled *The Asian Gang*. While Alexander is criticised elsewhere in this thesis (chp. 3 sec. 11), it remains the case that her work has proved insightful because of the ways in which she has sought to begin her research without the presumption of “innocence” on her part. This is not “to claim a position of privileged knowledge” (Alexander, 2000: 29) as emerging from one’s standpoint, however, for it is perhaps a weaker or more modest admission of the negation of ‘innocence’ in recognising the impact of previous interests upon one’s research. In Alexander’s case this resulted from her work with young ethnic minority men in London, and in my case it results from research with Muslim communities in Bradford and Glasgow. This requires some elaboration.

## **2.1. From proposal to research**

The initial PhD research proposal was informed by an ethnographic study of Pakistani ethnic origin communities in Bradford, which constituted part of a Masters degree submission (Meer, 2002a). From this study there emerged two dominant themes. The first expressed itself in interview data as identity articulations that accentuated various degrees of self-attributed Muslim identities. The second manifested itself amongst respondents in terms of perceptions, fears and experiences of hostility toward their being Muslim in a post-9/11 environment. During the summer of 2002, at the time of that research, these concerns were visibly informed at a national level of public discourse with the revelation that several young British Muslims had travelled to Afghanistan, either in support of Jihadist movements or in opposition to the military response to 9/11. The concomitant parade of a handful of British Muslims detained by the US military at Guantanamo Bay, gave further weight to the suspicion that something was out of kilter within Britain’s Muslim communities. These



revelations occupied and energised the mass media, a key vehicle of public discourse (Husband, 2000), where they were interpreted and portrayed as further evidence of Muslim ambivalences toward their British citizenship (Abbas, 2005: 12; Fekete, 2004). Questions of national loyalty thus became central to discussion about Muslims in Britain, and the initial PhD research proposal reflected this interest:

This project will investigate how far, and in what ways, current identities amongst youth of Pakistani descent in Britain present disjunctures in accounts of the Citizen, Community and Nation. The focus of the study is how forms of Islam are being used as expressions of ethnicity, and what affects the differential use of Islam by different subgroups of young people. Empirically, the project will investigate the hypothesis that adolescent boys of Pakistani descent are actively opposing definitions relating to country of origin and country of birth, favouring instead identification with a global notion of Islam as the most authentic description of their identity in Britain today (Meer, 2002b).

In addition to the issues emerging from the ethnographic data in Bradford that I felt required further exploration (articulations and accentuations of Muslim identities) was added the consideration of 'scale' (Hopkins, 2004). By this it is meant that the PhD proposal also sought to examine the relevance of Muslim identities in terms of individual, local and national accounts of belonging.

It was at this stage, however, that I deferred the proposed research to join a Joseph Rowntree Funded (JRF) project in Glasgow (Cassidy, O'Connor, and Dorrer, 2006) that sought to explore young people's experiences of 'transition' from adolescence to adulthood, examining in part the role of identity as a mediating variable in this transition (specifically in terms of self-esteem, perceived discrimination and psychological well-being (cf Verkuyten and Lay, 1998; Cassidy, O'Connor, Howe and Warden, 2005)). Since this was a comparative study of white and ethnic minority young people, and because I was encouraged to contribute to the research design and how it was operationalised, it also provided an opportunity to gauge whether identities for Muslims outside of Bradford and other familiar spaces where I had grown up in West Yorkshire, reflected a pattern in reporting stronger expressions of religious affiliation and association than of parental country of origin.

As this research indeed began to support and concur with other work highlighting the self-attributed emphasis of Muslim identities (cf O'Beiren 2004; Saeed et al 1999; Jacobson,



1998; Modood et al 1997, 1994; Samad, 1997), I simultaneously became aware that the forms of Muslim assertiveness discussed in chapters three, five and six were not confined to England alone. Although this thesis is not a comparative study, my time in Scotland alerted me to several cases of Muslim communities and organisations demanding civic inclusion and the accommodation of certain rights. One such example is discussed in chapter six where Muslim communities in Shawlands and Pollockshields – with the support of the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) – continue a six year campaign to turn several state schools, with a predominantly Muslim intake, into Scotland's first state funded Muslim school. This mirrors the trend of Muslim associations in Edinburgh, specifically with respect to acquiring some public money in the building of the central Mosque based in George Square.<sup>22</sup> What interested me was that whilst such examples of mobilisation for recognition were taking place, obviously more numerous in England – and often presented through the lobbying of organisations such as the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC), Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) and the more generic Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) – an increasingly negative objectification of Muslims, particularly in terms of understanding ethnic relations through security concerns, had gathered saliency.

It seemed to me that this had two key elements to it. The first located the source of any problems facing Muslim communities firmly at the door of Muslims themselves, and rehearsed the common sense racism (Lawrence, 1982) that it is the presence of problematic ethnic minorities that heralds their own racialisation, rather than the function of certain societal discourses that serve to racialise minorities (Hage, 1998). It is argued in chapter three that this discourse is present in some of the objections to the concept of 'Islamophobia' and anti-Muslim racism (sec. 9.1). Meanwhile, the second element increasingly became established as the most authentic account of why civil unrest and 'rioting' had taken place immediately prior to 9/11 in some northern towns home to both a small and large number of Muslims. As this chapter has already argued, this is the 'parallel lives' thesis that charges

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<sup>22</sup> As a spin-off from this initial relationship, Edinburgh city council now subsidises some of the activities of the 'Mosque Kitchen' which serves South Asian and North African food inside an area of the central Mosque to any diner at lunchtimes.

multiculturalism with encouraging Muslim communities to become self-segregating and isolationist (see section 1.5-1.7). Taken together, what this context provided for a research student was evidence of a pattern which intentionally and unintentionally positioned Muslims in Britain as “Public Enemy Number One – Britain’s Most Unwanted, as it were” (Alexander, 2000: 14). I was, therefore, of the opinion that the original intention to focus upon expressions of Muslim minority identity alone would not have adequately captured the way my research interests had developed. What I felt was required was some thicker conceptualisation that would allow me to theorise this duality where Muslim identities were striving to cultivate the moral and aesthetic insights to emerge from being a Muslim in Britain - and have them recognised - on the one hand, with this sense of public questioning, hostility and contempt on the other. As it is set out at the beginning of this chapter, and most fully in chapter two, I found this in W.E.B. Du Bois’s account of ‘double consciousness’. What concerns this thesis, then, are the cases of Muslim mobilisation for certain forms of civic rights, how these mobilisations are related to the forms of Muslim-consciousness set out in chapter three, and whether we should talk about the British Muslim experience in terms of a ‘double consciousness’ discussed in the following chapter.

This perhaps raises another question concerning the nature of the relationship between political advocacy and research. For while I have already stated that the research has not set out to adopt anything like a narrative enquiry approach that would have very little distance between the subject and the inquiry, it has neither adopted very positivistic approach that decouples my own biography from the political issues in my work. So the research has not necessarily pursued a conscious line of political coupling or detachment. Given the topicality of the issues and the examples that I have chosen to explore, however, a certain degree of sympathy is clearly apparent throughout the thesis. For instance, it draws attention to a political problem, namely the potential civic impairment of Muslims, and it does not pretend that we should be happy about this. So by identifying a ‘problem’, a normative perspective is already in operation. Not approaching this topic entirely neutrally, however, is the standard of all work on race and ethnicity. By that it is meant that while researchers undertake work



with rigor, in this instance through inquiry that includes case-study instruments, and deploy standards of self-criticism and other criticism, it is clear that the very terms discrimination, exclusion, impairment are all terms in which where there is a positive and a negative. Yet it is unusual to hear that a researcher ‘likes’ discrimination and that that is why they study it. Hence, while our concepts are a-symmetrical it makes sense to say that racial inequality is a bad thing and we should do something about it. This accords with Taylor’s (1989b) description of the research field as more like a slope on which political concepts take the researcher in, rather than a level playing field. This means that on the one-hand our identity makes the difference as to what we may be more likely to empathise with; and on the hand the whole field is structured around identifying problems and pointing towards remedies.

## 2.2. Case Study methodology

These concerns have been explored through the adoption of a mixed method case study analysis which seeks to garner a multi-perspectival analysis in which the researcher, although focusing upon one area, can consider the perspective of other actors and relevant groups of actors to examine the interaction between them. Thus in the examination of Muslim-consciousness that this thesis has undertaken, in chapters four, five and six the research has consciously garnered the views of objectors to, as well as proponents of, a more positive public representation in media discourse, Muslim contestations of discrimination legislation, and Muslim mobilisations for faith schooling.

Most closely associated with the work of the Chicago School,<sup>23</sup> case study research has been marked by periods of intense use and disuse throughout the course of sociological inquiry (Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg, 1991). Its under-use is somewhat surprising given that

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<sup>23</sup> As discussed in chapter two with respect to the work of Park *et al*, this could be because the city of Chicago, as a site of diverse immigration to the US, has historically presented sociologists with a wealth of material wherein issues of poverty, social mobility, political disenfranchisement, or other conditions sometimes associated immigration were ideally suited to the use of case study methodology (Hamel et al, 1993). Du Bois himself conducted some of the earliest case study research in the development of sociological inquiry. One of these studies became the landmark text *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), credited by many as creating the sub-discipline of ‘urban sociology’ that so animated the Chicago School with much intensity in later years (Lewis, 1993). Du Bois’ study was, simultaneously, heavily ethnographic and involved a great deal of participant observation; an approach that is not suited to the questions addressed in later chapters.



case study methodology is very hospitable to sociological exploration of ‘how’, ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions (Stake, 1995), particularly when they are pursued in real life contexts (Burns, 1990). With some cross-over between them, the multiple sources of evidence used in later empirical chapters accord with those set out in Robert Yin’s (1994; 1988) typology to include: (i) documents (policy documents and government bills); (ii) archival records (official statistics and the mass media); and (iii) semi-structured interviews (with protagonists and experts listed in Appendix IV and discussed further below). In order to substantiate the questions relevant to this thesis and most pertinent to each chapter, data that is already in existence, alongside purposive data that has been originally collated, is relied upon to pursue the chapter specific research questions.

A frequent criticism of case study methodology is that its dependence upon a single case renders it incapable of providing a generalizing conclusion. Giddens (1984), for example, has argued that case study methodology is too microscopic because it lacks a sufficient number of cases. This is an important point, because in this research only three cases are considered (see chapters four, five and six). To justify the validity of using only three cases one might draw upon Hamel et al (1993) and Robert Yin (1984, 1993, 1994) who forcefully argue that the relative size of a sample (whether 2, 10, or 100 cases are used) does not transform a multiple case into a macroscopic study. Rather, the goal of the study should establish the parameters in the way that even a single case can be considered acceptable, provided it meets the established objective. This is important because case study research is not meant to be a form of sampling research, but rather about selecting cases that maximize what can be learned in the period of time available for the study (Silverman, 1998). In this thesis the parameters are set by three broad issues that, at the beginning of each chapter, it is argued are instructive to our understanding of Muslim-consciousness in Britain.

### **2.2.1. Interview method**

As part of the case study approach, in-depth personal interviews were carried out with participants (listed in Appendix IV) who were selected on the basis of their involvement,

advocacy or expertise on Muslim mobilisations for the state sponsorship of Muslim faith-schooling and protection against anti-Muslim discrimination, both of which are explored in chapters five and six, and issues of stigma and stereotype in public and media discourses that are examined in chapter four. Because the research was concerned with issues of “content and process” (Bernard 2000: 210), rather than an estimation of population parameters, focused interviews were adopted to allow people to speak for themselves in a manner less feasible with structured questionnaires and rigid interview guides (Hammersly and Atkinson 1983; Burgess 1984). Open ended questions allowed the respondents to articulate their experiences and concerns, so that “rather than offering glib or easy answers” the discussion could be “as frank as possible” (Fielding, 1996: 138). The focus was, thus, on “what kinds of things are happening and why, rather than to determine the frequency of predetermined kinds of things that the researcher already believes can happen” (Lofland 1971: 76). Hence the respondents were encouraged to report anything they felt was either important or relevant so that even while the focus of the interview was defined, the respondents determined its content. A general statement of the research aims was provided to the respondents before each interview, and all interviewees provided informed consent to record the interview.

### **2.2.2. Discourse analysis**

Another important part of the case-study approach incorporates a discourse analysis of public and media commentary which explores some of the negative ways in which Islam and Muslims are portrayed, and how some British-Muslims have responded by representing themselves through a proliferation of Muslim media sources. It is argued that public and media discourse can make a relevant contribution to the sorts of civic status that minorities experience, and that an inquiry into these currents might contribute something meaningful to the more general concern with Muslim-consciousness in Britain.

An analysis of public and media discourses can include a range of methods that focus upon the ways in which text and ‘talk’ contribute to particular modes of understanding and representing our social world (Silverman, 2000). Influenced by Foucault’s concern to



signpost shifts in moral, ethical and, ultimately, historical notions of legitimising power and authority (processes keenly observed by Foucault in relation to conceptions of ‘madness’, ‘sexuality’, ‘punishment’, etc), a focus upon discourses can reveal the degree to which claims made in relation to a specific ‘problem’ often rest in hidden assumptions.<sup>24</sup> This is why chapter four explores the generally more negative commentary on Muslims, so that we can examine how and in what ways discourses of the ‘Muslim problem’ do indeed rest on or depart from what we know of Muslim minorities in Britain. Whilst it is true that the way in which things are represented are at any one time open to various interpretations, this does not prevent some interpretations from carrying greater authority and or legitimacy than others. In part this can be due to the context in which an interpretation is made, but it is also the case that things can be ‘encoded’ to offer limited range of ‘preferred readings’ in a way that suggests that representations do not solely *reflect* phenomena but that they also *construct* or *support* a particular idea of that phenomena. This has long been an argument of some cultural studies writers discussed in chapter three, and who have taken the idea of ‘discourse’ in talk and text to explore issues of power in the manner alluded to in Foucault’s work. Thus Hall (1992: 291) has argued:

Discourse is a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e. a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way. It also limits the other ways in which the topic can be constructed.

Whilst not exclusive, there is a primary focus in chapter four upon newspaper and journalist commentary that is taken to be an important barometer of public and media discourse (Poole

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<sup>24</sup> In *The History of Sexuality* (1979: 93), for example, Foucault argues that power emanates from every point in the social field, since it is not a monolithic force, “an institution, and nor a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a given society”. Consequently, dominant discourses or modes of knowledge can reinforce particular perceptions and understandings, norms and values amounting to a form of power that often passes ‘unseen’. Although one might not agree with this interpretation and, amongst other things, the patent denial of structure in Foucault’s account of power (Fraser, 1989; Harstock, 1990), particularly as a coercive force (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 1993), it is important to recognise his insight not as a teleological theory, but as a sort of “toolkit” as Foucault (1980: 145) himself suggested. Dyer (1993: 31) supports this reading in his argument that the ways “we are seen in part determines the way we are treated; how we treat others is based on how we see them; such seeing is based on representation.”

and Richardson, 2006; Meer, 2006; Franklin, 2004; Poole, 2002; Richardson, 2001). The importance of print media discourse is supported in the writer and broadcaster Alibhai-Brown's (1998: 118) argument that "print media journalists set the agenda. What appears in the newspapers is picked up by the broadcasters who frequently recycle in more subtle and acceptable forms". Similarly, Van Dijk (1999) has argued that print journalism often supplies the currency of media discourse in general - since "speakers routinely refer to newspapers as their source (and authority) of knowledge or opinions". Furthermore, he claims, "by influencing majority audience attitudes, values and beliefs", the power of print media discourses disproportionately shape what is known of ethnic minorities (Van Dijk, 1999, cited in Richardson, 2001: 148). What is cumulatively being argued, then, is that an analysis of public and media discourses might reveal something valuable about common beliefs and underlying value systems (McQuail, 1994), so that if one was to consider the dynamics of media discourse as being more epiphenomenal with respect to wider societal concerns, analysis would still reveal views held, even if these are not in and of themselves efficacious. This is particularly relevant because chapter four explores some of the commonsense arguments that, as Favell and Modood (2004: 493) have argued, fail to do justice to the complexity of 'hard cases', and encourage a conflation between fact and fiction when there is a reliance "on the unchallenged reproduction of anecdotal facts usually taken from newspapers". This is a key point because while it may be difficult to gauge a link between 'thought' and 'action', or how negative or positive conceptions Muslims may translate into racist violence against, or beneficial treatment of, these minorities, what we can point to are the studies of Wilson and Gutierrez (1995: 45) which show that "negative, one-sided or stereotypical media portrayals and news coverage do reinforce racist attitudes in those members of the audience who do have them and can channel mass actions against the group that is stereotypically portrayed". To this end chapter four reports on a general level content analysis of argumentation strategies evidenced in specifically negative public and media discourse to help unpack the internal content of these discourses (for detailed discussion of



‘argumentation strategies’ see Meer, 2006 (included as appendix III); Poole, 2002 and Richardson, 2001).

### 3. Chapter outline

The **next chapter** turns to the work of W.E.B. Du Bois to explore the utility of his idea of ‘double consciousness.’ In dialoguing this idea with Hegelian phenomenology, the chapter delineates a central distinction between two kinds of consciousness: one *in* itself and one *for* itself. It argues that these ideas prove invaluable in capturing the dual character of unrecognised Muslim minority subjectivities and their transformative potential, as well as the conditions of impaired civic status that are sometimes afforded to minorities by mainstream society. The chapter ends by identifying points of convergence between Du Bois and key contemporary theorists of multiculturalism, demonstrating the strengths and multifaceted nature of Du Bois before summarising the theoretical framework that is applied in later chapters. It is then argued that because Muslim-consciousness in Britain has emerged relatively recently, an inquiry into the discursive currents through which post-immigrant minority identities have historically been framed and affected is required.

To this end **chapter three** explores the nature and fruition of Muslim identities; their form, their content, and how they contrast with other minority identities within the British political context. Particular attention in this chapter is afforded to the fields of race-relations and anti-racism, and the enormous influence they have had upon the political (not least legal) conceptualisation of minorities as racial, ethnic or other political subjects, from the early periods of post-war Commonwealth immigration to the present day. The chapter concludes by addressing the charges of essentialism (and/or the negation of ‘hybridity’) directed toward the idea of Muslim ‘group’ identities, before setting out the implications of the preceding discussion in the subsequent analysis.

This is then related to the first of the multi-method case-studies set out in **chapter four** which examines the public and media discourses about Muslims in Britain, specifically the manner in which minorities are publicly represented. This chapter demonstrates how this



process is integral to Du Bois' account of double consciousness. It is argued that public and media discourses can contribute to the sorts of civic status that minorities possess, and that an inquiry into these discursive currents could contribute something meaningful to the broader concern with Muslim-consciousness in Britain. With this in mind, the chapter explores some of the ways in which Islam and Muslims are portrayed across salient axis, and comparatively, in relation to some other groups, and how Muslims themselves have responded through a proliferation of Muslim media outlets.

Reporting on the second of three case studies, **chapter five** extends this analysis to the arena of anti-discrimination formulas that, alongside education, are understood as forming a cornerstone to the sorts of British multicultural citizenship surveyed earlier in this chapter, and civic status that this confers. By applying the discussion of cultural racism and Islamophobia that was critically set out in chapter three, chapter five evaluates how and why these racisms are or are not recognised within current discrimination legislation. This proceeds through consideration of how we have reached the current situation; to what extent it works, and where Muslims in Britain are positioned within it. It is argued that if we reject a normative grammar of race and accept that legal categories of race and ethnicity must not be foreclosed to the complexities of socially contingent periods of Muslim racialisation, a coherent argument can be made for Muslim inclusion under existing anti-discrimination formulae. That Muslims presently remain outside the reach of these can be accounted for by the lack of political will and social importance attributed to challenging anti-Muslim discrimination.

**Chapter six** then examines why there have been sustained Muslim mobilisations on the issue of Muslim schools within and across diverse Muslim communities. It considers what the engagement or non-engagement of Muslims over the issue of education reveals about the incorporation of Muslims into a rubric of British-citizenship, specifically with respect to civic and political participation; and whether a recognition and reflection of the substantive elements of a Muslim-consciousness within the sphere of education address the sorts of double-consciousness discussed in chapter two.

**Chapter seven** concludes by delineating and describing four tendencies in the emergence of a Muslim-consciousness. The implications of these are discussed in the ensuing chapters, from which four main types of Muslim-consciousness are deciphered. Whilst in truth there is overlap and interaction between each kind, it is argued that enough consistency exists in their form and content to delineate the following four, progressively outwardly moving, tendencies that reflect the Du Bosian characterisation of the development of a minority consciousness from being *in* itself (as (i) ‘impaired’ and (ii) ‘reactive’) to a minority consciousness that is *for* itself (as (iii) ‘pragmatic’ and (iv) potentially ‘synthesized’). The thesis ends by looking forward to emerging research agendas concerning Muslim-consciousness in Britain.



## Chapter Two

### The value of Du Bois and the meaning of ‘double consciousness’.

[I]t is our duty to conserve our physical powers, our intellectual endowments, our spiritual ideals; as a race we must strive by race organisation, by race solidarity, by race unity to that broader humanity which freely recognises differences but sternly deprecates inequalities in their opportunities of development.

Du Bois, *The Conservation of Races* (1897).

#### 1. Introduction

The previous chapter claimed that W. E. B. Du Bois bequeaths a rich body of work that can theorise, as the opening quotation describes, social-formations which strive for an elevation of their civic status, specifically through an incorporation of their ‘difference’ into prevailing citizenship practices. While this body of work is certainly not limited to the American context,<sup>1</sup> it remains the case that a great deal of his analysis took place there.<sup>2</sup>

As chapters three and five recognise, America is a country from which Britain has historically learned a great deal about race and racism; sometimes adopting or incorporating much in the way of approaches to race-relations and anti-racism. It is a little surprising, therefore, to learn that whilst Du Bois continues to be resurrected and celebrated in the American literature on race, ethnicity and political incorporation, there is no evidence of such research on this side of the Atlantic.<sup>3</sup> In accounting for this, one might reason that his relevance to contemporary Britain has expired. Or, alternatively, that he provides such a contextually specific narrative on the experience of African-Americans, that it could never have been satisfactorily applied to Britain anyway. Moreover, since Du Bois is largely

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<sup>1</sup> And therefore capable of eschewing the increasingly prevalent charge of ‘methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002: 301) against the historical legacies of thinkers writing in an era not characterised by the globalisation or comparative methodology debates we are familiar with today. See Marable’s (1996) ‘The Pan-Africanism of W.E.B. Du Bois’ in Bell et al (1996). Though interesting, this charge can be overdone and sometimes obscures more than it illuminates. For example, see chapter three (sec. 7) and chapter five (sec. 2, footnote 4) for a critique of Favell (1998) on this issue.

<sup>2</sup> See Bell, Grosholz and Stewart (1996) for a historical account of Du Bois’ impact on American ‘race thinking’.

<sup>3</sup> With the possible exception of Paul Gilroy’s (1993) *The Black Atlantic* which is discussed later in this and the next chapter. As it will become apparent, even Gilroy’s treatise does not so much innovate with, as much as expertly re-affirm, aspects of Du Bois’ contribution.



understood as having pioneered the sociology of colour racism, does a modern Britain that is not marked solely by the effects of colour racism, but is instead punctuated by multiple racisms, alongside ethnic and religious diversity, invalidate the application of his work?

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate why this is not the case. It does this by reconsidering arguably the most important concept to emerge from Du Bois' attempt to theorise the inclusion of minorities. This is his idea of 'double consciousness' as set out in his essay entitled *Of Our Spiritual Strivings*, which was published in his 1903 collection *The Souls of Black Folk*.<sup>4</sup> Through re-reading this concept, Du Bois will be presented as a precursor to later advocates of 'difference' (Young, 1990), 'cultural diversity' (Parekh, 2000), and 'recognition' (Taylor, 1992). Prior to this, however, and due mainly to their similar conceptions of consciousness and ideas of reciprocity, it is argued that a rewarding method of decoding novel implications from Du Bois' concept is to dialogue it with Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic (hereafter MSD) outlined in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). Indeed such an approach does not require a great intellectual leap from Du Bois' own work because throughout the composition of his texts relevant to this discussion, Du Bois was already drawing inspiration from Hegel's conception of consciousness and synthesising this with his own sociological imagination (Gilroy, 2004, 1993; Stevens, 1995; Gooding-Williams, 1987; Williamson, 1984).<sup>5</sup> Of course this needs to be demonstrated textually, which in turn requires some appreciation of Hegelian consciousness. Consequently, this chapter begins with an exploration of Hegelian consciousness as outlined in the MSD; before we discuss its impact

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<sup>4</sup> This was based upon his earlier essay in the *Atlantic Monthly* entitled 'Strivings of a Negro People' (published in August, 1897). As it will become apparent, this thesis does not attempt to draw upon the entirety of the Du Boisian cannon, quite the opposite in fact. The thesis limits itself to re-reading the cited essay rather than trying to reconcile the different trajectories of Du Bois' contribution. These are wide and varied and include, for example, intellectual and political excursions during later life that led Du Bois to embrace Communism and Pan-Africanism (indeed, Du Bois died in Ghana in 1963 and was given a state funeral by President Kwame Nkrumah). See Lewis (2000, 1993) for a 'periodisation' account of Du Bois' work, and Kendhammer (2007) for a critical but constructive response to reading Du Bois in this manner.

<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting, as Zamir (1995) does, that Du Bois does not always make *explicit* reference to Hegel in his work, which informs Reed Jr.'s (1997) rebuttal of the view that Hegel's influence on Du Bois is obvious. Since a historical, genealogical analysis of the influence of one author on another is beyond the focus of this thesis, this argument will not be pursued further. Instead, it is the complementarity of the two thinkers that is of greatest interest here, and it is equally accepted that reading Du Bois into Hegel could be just as fruitful as looking for the Hegel in Du Bois.



upon a reading of Du Boisian accounts of the interaction between *self* and society – particularly with forms of consciousness – racialised or other – that strive for ‘recognition’ *in* or *for* themselves.

- The implication this holds for thinking about Muslim mobilisations is taken up and considered at length through the lens of ethnicity in the following chapter, and adopted in the empirical analyses set out in chapters four, five and six.

The next section will show how an understanding of Hegel’s MSD is helpful in grasping how Du Bois conceives of the power held by a dominant group<sup>6</sup> to afford status, invoke complicity or use coercion in denying recognition or affording misrecognition to a minority, and that the constituent parts of double consciousness emerge as an outcome and a resource in relation to the need to maintain a sense of *self* in response to this misrecognition. It is to this that the thesis now turns.

## 2. Hegelian consciousness

In his famous allegory of the master and the slave, Hegel outlines a series of conflicts and their dialectical relationship to different forms of consciousness. In examining reciprocal relations of power, he attempts to ‘lift the veil’ and reveal the processes mediating the transformation of a consciousness from dependence to one of self-consciousness and

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<sup>6</sup> As the previous chapter states (footnote 1 and sec. 1.7), ideas of ‘group-ness’ are thoroughly problematised and reconstructed in chapters three, four and five, but it is worth noting that Du Bois defines a ‘group’ in several ways. His most obvious criteria is derived from his socio-historical understanding of race, something best seen as a precursor to Omi and Winant’s (1986: 68-9) idea of race as a ‘cluster concept’ - a way of referring to a group of persons who share, and are thereby distinguished by, several properties ‘disjunctively’. Thus Du Bois (1939: 1) writes: “It is generally recognized today that no scientific definition of race is possible. [...] Race would seem to be a dynamic and not a static conception. Within this, however, he also uses the anthropological conception of culture to refer to groups who have developed a comprehensive way of life or a layered and distinguishable system of practices. It is also worth noting, as the opening quotation makes clear, that Du Bois uses race as criteria for group definition in order to explicitly advance an account of social pluralism (in which each group has something to teach other groups so that people are encouraged to cultivate the moral and aesthetic insights that are contained within their culture for the benefit of humanity). As such his definition of a group is actually much closer to the idea of cultural groups espoused in some Anglophone political philosophy, specifically in debates concerning multiculturalism and citizenship. This is explored with reference to advocates of ‘difference’ (Young, 1990) ‘cultural diversity’ (Parekh, 2000), and ‘recognition’ (Taylor, 1992) in sections 4.1-4.4 of this chapter but pursued with more sociological rigour, in reference to identity categories and groupings vis-à-vis Muslim-consciousness, throughout chapter three.



independence. It is worth clarifying at the outset that rather than providing an empirical account of power-relations in actual slave societies, Hegel's master-slave dialectic should instead be understood as an abstracted 'state of nature' argument conceived as a corrective to Hobbes (Davis, 1975). By this it is meant that through the MSD, Hegel is trying to draw our attention to the manner in which a Hobbesian war of 'all against all' is unable to maintain the very individuality or independence upon which it is premised.<sup>7</sup> This is perhaps best captured in Guyora Binder's (1989: 1435) reading of the MSD as an attempt to show that "freedom [has] to be conceived as some form of association rather than independence; and that it [has] to be mediated by politics rather than defended from politics". Besides stressing the primacy of the political, Binder seeks to position the MSD as "an intellectual foundation for modern communitarian conceptions of freedom in its devastating critique of the ideal of independence" (ibid: 1437).

Why Binder might make such a bold claim stems from a question that Hegel posed himself, namely: how does a person come to conceive herself as an independent being and/or when do they become conscious of themselves as such? Hegel's answer rests on a process of objectification which reasons that we must first identify - outside of ourselves - some "purposive intelligence" (Binder, ibid) from which it proceeds that others are required to establish our own independent selfhood or identity

A self-consciousness has before it another self-consciousness; it has come outside itself. This has a double significance. First it has lost its own self, since it finds itself as an *other* being; secondly, it has thereby sublated that other, for it does not regard the other as essentially real, but sees its own self in the other (Hegel, 2003 [1910]: 105).

What prevents our collapse into our own perceptions, therefore, is our ability to see "our own self in the other". The ethical basis this provides in terms of its potential normative, political

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<sup>7</sup> In *Leviathan*, Hobbes set out what he understands to be the foundation of societies and legitimate governments. He argues that, although in their 'natural condition' some people may be stronger or more intelligent than others, none are strong or intelligent enough to eschew the fear of violent death. When faced by this stark reality, our 'natural state' cannot help but to want defend ourselves in any way possible. Self-defence against violent death is Hobbes' highest human necessity and, from this, rights are borne. In Hobbes' 'state of nature', then, each of us *as individuals* have a right to everything in the world, yet due to the scarcity of resources there is a constant, and rights-based, 'war of all against all' (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). Individual life in the 'state of nature' is thus "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short". See Introduction in Tuck (1989).

implications for Du Boisian conceptions of consciousness is what this first section on Hegel seeks to establish. To this end, it will be argued that we cannot receive recognition outside of a political community characterised by reciprocal or mutual recognition. That is, the obligations rendered under conditions of *Sittlichkeit*<sup>8</sup> or ethical life, “by virtue of being members of one of the ongoing bonded communities of common life and common freedom” (Taylor, 1989a: 864). To satisfactorily understand the meaning of this, we must unpack the complexities and rewards of the MSD.

## 2.1. The Master-Slave Dialectic

Hegel’s dialectic, presented as an allegory or vignette, begins with two independent beings that - at an underdeveloped stage of history - try to “wrest recognition from one another without reciprocating” (Taylor, 1975: 153). The reason “each aims at the destruction and death of the other” (Hegel, 2003 [1910]: 12), or is driven to demand recognition while conferring none, fighting for it instead of cooperatively conferring it, is because each carries a distorted conception of individual identity, struggling for Hobbesian like survival. Unlike the Hobbesian predicament (see footnote 7), however, Hegel’s framing of this ‘state of nature’ scenario posits that when this struggle takes place and one of the protagonists is defeated, rather than being slain they are instead enslaved by the victor. According to Hegel, this is because the victor cannot receive the desired recognition from the defeated if they do not exist, and so the whole process would have been futile. The completion of this first conflict is best described in Hegel’s own terms:

The dissolution of that simple unity is the result of the first experience; through this there is posited a pure self-consciousness and a consciousness which is not purely for itself... [...] The one is independent, and its essential nature is to be for itself, the other is dependent, and its essence is life or existence for another. The former is the Master, or Lord, the latter the Bondsman. (Hegel, 2003: 108)

The master is then positioned as an independent being and is recognised as such by the enslaved. There emerges, however, a discrepancy between the master’s consciousness and

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<sup>8</sup> Defined by Taylor (1975: 376) as referring to “the moral obligations I have to an ongoing community of which I am a part.”



the reality of the situation; between the master's idea of himself as a true independent being, and his concept of the outside world. This is because the master's conception of himself - as truly independent and recognised as such by the slave - is necessarily mediated through this two party relationship.

Having argued that the master achieves a dependent rather than an absolute status, Hegel insists that it is in fact the very freedom of the master that is determined through his relation to the slave, specifically because the consciousness of the one party is necessarily mediated through its relation to the other:

In all this, the unessential consciousness is, for the master, the object which embodies the truth of his certainty for himself. But it is evident that this object does not correspond to its notion; for just where the master has effectively achieved Lordship, he really finds that something has come about quite different from an independent consciousness. It is not independent, but rather a dependent consciousness that he has achieved (ibid: 109-10).

Before we critically assess this understanding, by writing in the next section of *dialectics* in the plural rather than the singular, we should recognise that Hegel's position brings the master to a point which Alexandre Kojève (1969: 22) describes as an "existential impasse", where the recognition sought by the master during the initial conflict is not what is achieved. For in enslaving the other and relegating them to a position of subordination, the master cannot receive the recognition of them self as an independent being because (a) their own notion of mastery is dependent upon that of the slave, and (b) recognition is not of sufficient value coming as it does from one relegated in status. As Hegel argues above, at first the master does not realise the disparity between the reality of the situation and their impression of it.

## 2.2. Teleology and group psyches

Following the initial conflict then, Hegel sees the dialectic as a representation of how the fate and consciousness of the two parties is no longer independent but, albeit unequally, *interdependent* in that they have become inextricably linked in a process that necessitates some form of resolution; that they effectively have to sink or swim together. Taylor (1975:

155) shares this interpretation when he stresses that the process of coming to self-consciousness is a “dualistic” one. For both Taylor and Kojève the slave must recover their self-consciousness not only for their own survival, but also to resolve the existential impasse of the master. Similarly, the master must recognize the fact that their fate is now directly dependent upon the development of the consciousness of the slave. The anticipated independence of the master becomes not only a dependence upon the slave for his present form of self-consciousness, but, more importantly, rests upon the possibility of the future development of that consciousness to a state of true self-consciousness or independence.

- **Specifically: the movement from a self-consciousness *in* itself to the transformative potential of a self-consciousness *for* itself, or from one’s historically *ascribed* identity to one’s politically *self-constructed* identity.**

There is of course a teleological prescription in some of these readings but what is of interest is the way in which something valuable can be stated, as it was by Du Bois, without it necessitating a teleological course, and this is no less true with the leap that Hegel makes from individual to group psyches. In common with a tradition amongst philosophers to begin with the rational self, Hegel also starts with the self but, as we have seen, argues that this cannot exist in a *self substantiating process*, and so therefore communalises it. Thus in contrast to Hobbes who argued that in leaving a ‘state of nature’ we lose freedom, Hegel shows that the social and the political *is* the condition of freedom in which self is a social or communal self. As it is argued below, however, the sorts of multicultural recognition that Du Bois espouses does not follow from this alone.

- **That is that the case for mutual recognition does not on its own establish the legitimacy of multicultural inclusion for Du Bois, since, as we shall see, Du Bois makes a universalistic ethical move in arguing for the equal but differentiated inclusion of all peoples on the basis of their common membership of a polity.**

What is required at this stage, however, is a closer inspection of the internal logic of Hegel’s dialectic, where it is revealed that during his initial discussion of the development of



consciousness, Hegel fails to distinguish between what appear to be three *separate* constructs in the MSD.

### 2.3. Multiple dialectics and corresponding relationships

These multiple dialectics roughly divide between (a) the *present-focused* as a logical interaction or binary, which distinguishes between the existence and non-existence of an interaction between two parties and (b) the *empirical possibilities* to emerge from the power retained by the master who, in the final analysis, possesses an autonomy that the slave lacks. These possibilities shape the future of this relationship and the ways in which it might continue (reciprocity being one possibility, coercion another). The nature of the relationship as it exists and changes may then be described by tracing (c) the moral dialectic, which seeks to engage - through the masters' authoritative paternalism - the slaves' reciprocal complicity in the dialectic, serving to externalise and normalise the ethical constraints of this relationship. In what one might cite as an unreasoned inference, Hegel utilises the two constructs of the dialectic, outlined as (a) and (c), which herald a mutual dependency for attaining *status* (however uneven that may be) between the master and the slave, before – without clear reason - moving to tie the very development of consciousness<sup>9</sup> upon this struggle for status recognition.

- **Hegel circumvents a step in his allegory (b) which pertains to the empirical possibilities that, should the slave refuse to acquiesce with the master's dominance, the master can coerce the slave as a subordinate and thwart the reciprocity required to make the dialectic function on the basis of recognition alone.**

Regardless, therefore, of the appropriate recognition granted to the master by the slave, the slave is dependent upon the Master for their coming to self-consciousness, whilst the master

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<sup>9</sup> Including the subsequent development of freedom because, for Hegel *and* later Du Bois, one can never be 'free' without at first developing a sense of consciousness, since the latter governs the former.

retains the agency to minimise their own dependence upon the slave. Thus, Hegel ignores the extent to which coercion can be either a competitor or partner of recognition.

In light of this, it might be more helpful to speak of master-slave *dialectics* in the plural, rather than the singular, and to suggest that there are actually three different interactions taking place in this allegory. This appears to be a more promising insight than the initial reading offered by Taylor and Kojève, specifically because it can be employed to probe the intricacies of forms of consciousness developed in the present-focused and moral dialectic outlined by Hegel, in order to distinguish between these and the empirical dialectic of majority-minority relations that so occupied Du Bois.

#### 2.4. Touchstones for Du Bois

Leaving the master at the impasse earlier identified by Kojève, Hegel turns his attention to the position of the slave, which is also contrary to what might be expected, since the consciousness of the slave is essentially in a position of ‘potentiality’:

Just as lordship showed its essential nature to be the reverse of what it wants to be, so, too, bondage will, when completed, pass into the opposite of what it immediately is: being a consciousness repressed within itself, it will enter into itself, and change round into real and true independence. (Hegel, 2003: 110)

In a strong reading, Kojève places the slave as the instrument and agent of all historical change:

There is nothing fixed in him. He is ready for change; in his very being, he is change, transcendence, transformation, education; he is historical becoming at his origin, in his essence, in his very existence...the experience of the fight predisposes the slave to transcendence, to progress; to History (1969: 22).

Given the tension we have identified, Kojève’s deterministic reading might better be interpreted as offering only a potential avenue rather than a determinate outcome. The transformative possibility provided by this sort of context can be contrasted with Du Bois’ reading of the broader sense of consciousness developed among African-Americans, and particularly in their conception of freedom as newer, and possibly richer, because:

...out of slavery and out of the later striving of black folk...in an oppressive white world came a rising sense of black soul. Thus it was that white thesis bred black



antithesis, which took the best of white culture and moved it upward towards a new synthesis. (Williamson, 1984: 405)

This end stage of the dialectic, however, does not generally constitute our main concern. Of far greater relevance in contrasting Du Bois with Hegel are the intricacies in the processes of the development of consciousness. As Binder (1989) suggests, rather than being a specific model of dominance and submission, the MSD is a series of wheels within wheels; an attempt to explain historical processes, through an examination of the transformation of consciousness within a social relationship that is, itself, transformed by and through these shifts in consciousness. With the distinction between those three separate constructs in mind, we can infer from Binder some sympathy to the multi-faceted nature of the development of consciousness.

### 3. What is double consciousness?

Like all forms of dialectic,<sup>10</sup> the MSD is a process in which concepts and categories are never static but are marked by constant transformation and mediation. This becomes evident in Du Bois' account of the political development of America in that - just as it is the case for the master and the slave - in *Of Our Spiritual Strivings* (1903) the fate of American consciousness is dependent upon the unfolding relationships and the dialogue or interaction between minority and majority subjectivities; as two separate but entwined forms of consciousness. It is, moreover, these *dialectics* which will, for Du Bois, determine the course of American history.<sup>11</sup> Du Bois introduces his account of double consciousness in the

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<sup>10</sup> Although conceptions of the dialectic include 'thesis', 'antithesis' and 'synthesis', these terms were never actually employed by Hegel but according to Young (1972: 132) come from the work of Fichte and Schelling. Thus Hegel does not define the dialectic in terms of this triadic movement, arguing instead that the dialectic "is characterised as negative reason, the function of which is to dissolve the fixed concepts of the understanding... By Contradiction, Hegel intends not simply a logical relation between incompatible propositions, but a relationship of conflict between things in the world. He does not mean that a formal logical relation is the moving principle of the world but that all finite things in nature and in history exhibit conflicting tendencies in themselves, by which they are driven on to the realisation of a more complete and concrete situation" (ibid).

<sup>11</sup> Gooding-Williams (1987) argues that Du Bois explicitly offers a kind of Hegelian philosophy of African American history, and that the philosophical model for Du Bois' conception of historical process is Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. See footnote five of this chapter.

following passage from *Strivings*, and since this is the main text that I wish to focus upon in the proceeding discussion, it is worth quoting at length:

...the Negro is...born with a veil, and gifted with a second-sight in this American world, - a world which yields to him no true self consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, - an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,-this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spat upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face (Du Bois, 1999 [1903]: 10-11).<sup>12</sup>

On the surface, this passage has as its fundamental theme a duality in African American life. Fuelled largely - but not exclusively - by colour racism, this duality is a kind of paradox which stems from being intimately part of a polity but not excluded from its public culture, or, as Du Bois characteristically puts it, 'being an outcast and stranger in mine own house (ibid)'. Yet further scrutiny reveals four different issues, loosely grouped into two sets, which encompass much more than an outcome predicated upon the effects of colour racism. Moreover, since there are a range of issues signalled in his description of double consciousness, and because this range attempts to mediate between agency and structure, individual and society, and between minority and majority subjectivities, there has on occasions been a tendency to conflate, reduce or confuse the role of one to the other.<sup>13</sup> This concern further instils the need to unpack Du Bois' description before we analyse and adapt it for conceptual use in any normative sense.

In the opening half of the passage, Du Bois outlines his reading of the *self*, specifically the significance of (1a) the internalisation by African-Americans of the contempt white

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<sup>12</sup> In some versions that reproduce the Atlantic Monthly (August, 1897) essay, the ending of the final line reads: "without losing the opportunity of self-development."

<sup>13</sup> Cornel West and Kwame Anthony Appiah- both recognised as Du Bois experts, albeit with ambiguous relationships to Du Bois' work - have shown little interest in unpacking and re-reading this canonical passage in their commentaries (see West and Gates Jr., 1996 and Appiah, 1992).



America has for them, and (1b) the creation of an additional perspective in the form of a 'gifted second sight' to which experiencing this gives rise. In the second half of the passage he identifies how societal in-congruencies emerge from (2a) conceiving of African-Americans as having fewer civic rights but no less the duties or responsibilities of an ideal of American citizenship, and (2b) diverging sets of un-reconciled ideals or 'strivings' held by African-Americans which are objected to by white society, specifically emerging from an 'enduring hyphenation' signalled in his notion of 'twoness'. In sum, these four interacting constructs give rise to a condition of double consciousness as Du Bois understood it. The function of descriptive metaphors such as the 'veil' cut across and straddle these interacting issues, and are therefore discussed when they appear relevant.

### **3.1(a) The conflicted construction of the *self***

The notion of the *self* plays an important role in Du Bois' concept, and - beginning with his reference to looking at one's self through the eyes of others - Du Bois, like Hegel, seeks to illustrate how our sense of *self* is necessarily constructed in a social context that is continually subject to implicit power relations. If we recall, Hegel suggests that our idea of ourselves, what we claim to be, and what we really think we are can be dependent upon how others come to view us, to the extent that our sense of *self* is developed in a continuing dialogue.<sup>14</sup>

- **Self-consciousness exists here "only by being acknowledged or recognised".**

**Thus, like the master and the slave, each of us derives our sense of *self* through an interaction with others, through coming to view our individual selves as others see us, such that the refusal of others to acknowledge our humanity, our**

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<sup>14</sup> Of course all theories of the *self* in sociology emphasize the importance of the 'generalised other' and the 'significant other'. Thus Mead (1934) would later refer to this process as 'engaging with our significant others', Goffman (1959) would situate it in the context of 'dramaturgy', and later still Taylor (1994) would see it as part of the 'dialogical' construction of identity. This is returned to later in the discussion but distinction here is between a benign self-other relationship from one predicated on subordination.

existence or our faculty to contribute something meaningful, inevitably underscores a sense of alienation.<sup>15</sup>

In using this Hegelian perspective to understand the Du Boisian position, it can be argued that Du Bois sees something unique about the consciousness of the *self* among African-Americans. As an Other and as 'a problem', 'black folk' developed a double consciousness where they have a sense "of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others". This is because negative disapproval in the form of presenting African-Americans as possessing a degraded cultural heritage or limited contribution to American life creates an internal echo of white America's racist judgements.

It should be clear then that this conception of the *self* is not, for Du Bois, a reflection of the atomistic *self*. It is instead conceived of as culturally embedded and socially mediated, leading Du Bois to argue that self recognition is a form of cultural recognition which, necessarily, sees one's cultural identity in connection with the cultural identities of other members of one's community. Hence the injuries suffered from prejudice are not only due to the overt hostility from the majority, but also come from minority invisibility.

This first source of conflict in Du Bois' passage can then be seen as contributing to a sense of double consciousness through the unwillingness of one group, contingent on their historical dominance as 'master', to recognise African-Americans satisfactorily, to the extent that the consciousness of *self* is established distortedly through that of another.

### **3.1(b) The creation of an additional perspective or 'gifted second sight'.**

Accompanying Du Bois' understanding of the *self* is the role of subjectivity, for he situates the standpoint developed within minority-majority relations at the centre of his account of double consciousness. This is exemplified in his suggestion that the experience of

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<sup>15</sup> Taylor (1994) goes further in sharing with Du Bois the view that systematised mis-recognition or negative disapproval compromises our sense of self worth and constitutes a moral injury; Young (1990) characterises such a tendency as a form of majoritarianist oppression, whilst Parekh (2000) deploys a pluralist argument beginning with a communitarian account of the culturally embedded self and the necessity of recognising how the self is formed, before making the stronger case that cultural diversity is an intrinsic value.



oppression allows African-Americans to understand the promise of freedom in a way that white Americans cannot.<sup>16</sup>

In the passage from *Strivings* Du Bois refers to this as ‘a second sight’, a way of seeing things that escape the notice of the majority, specifically the distance between democratic ideals and the practice of racial exclusion, so that “once in a while through all of us there flashes some clairvoyance, some clear idea of what America really is. We who are dark can see America in a way that Americans cannot” (Du Bois, 1971: 416). This is realised in everyday scenarios where it is raised to a conscious level, serving as a means to probe deeper meanings and contradictions of a racialized experience and providing the resource for transformative change. For Du Bois, then, racial alienation is arguably similar to forms of class alienation in its potential for initiating change.

This notion of ‘second sight’ also ties into his metaphor of the *veil* which, in the passage, serves as an expression of how those behind it – African-Americans - see the dominant society, whilst those in front of it – white America - may not see the excluded as full co-members of their polity. In this way, it might be argued that Du Bois presents an inverted version of the Rawlsian thought experiment of placing a ‘choosing subject’ behind ‘a veil of ignorance’ in an effort to ascertain unbiased, and transcending, propositions of human interest. What such an understanding means is that the Du Boisian subject is looking out from behind a socially constructed apartheid, in full knowledge of critical aspects of their identity. Moreover, and unlike the early Rawls (1971), Du Bois does not consider it possible to presuppose that a person can be detached from the contingent aspects provided by society, history and culture.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Lukacs (1971) later argued that structurally defined class positions could offer a superior vantage point with which to view social realities. Later still some feminists, particularly Harding (1986), put forward the idea of ‘standpoint epistemologies’ which stressed that women’s experiences and location – their standpoint - could provide a better place from which to view knowledge production. This is implicit in some contemporary multiculturalists’ positions discussed in this chapter (sec. 4.1-4.4.).

<sup>17</sup> In fact, he explicitly advances an account of social pluralism in which people are encouraged to cultivate the moral and aesthetic insights that are contained in their culture for the benefit of humanity; this is developed with reference to Parekh (2000) later in the chapter (sec. 4.3).

Du Bois' *veil* might then best be described as a one-way mirror, with the minority seeing the majority through the glass, whilst the latter sees only their own reflection (of mastery or dominance) as the former remain hidden behind the mirror. This quite obviously complements Hegel's MSD, specifically in Du Bois' suggestion that *those without power are able to see those with power in a different light*, since the actions of those without power must always take the powerful into account. Reading his account in this manner adds further import to the second of Hegel's dialectics, specifically that the master can coerce the slave with a power that the slave lacks, which may explain why Du Bois argues that 'second sight' is both a gift and a burden.

### **3.2(a) Bound by the *requirements* but not the *rewards* of citizenship.**

The overarching structural factors which Du Bois identifies as contributing to a sense of double consciousness are twofold. The first of these is outlined in his assertion that historically embedded racial dualism in mainstream American society denies African-Americans the same degree of civil liberties afforded to their white American counterparts. Simultaneously, however, this racial dualism continues to conceive of African-Americans as having fewer civic rights but no less the duties or responsibilities of an ideal of American citizenship. He thus argues that within the rhetoric of democratic citizenship and its attendant ideals, 'the Nation has not yet found peace from its sins; the freedman has not yet found in freedom his promised land' (Du Bois, 1999 [1903]: 12). This 'promised land' is of course the stage in which racial and cultural differences are not taken as grounds for the justification of natural inequality or superiority.

For Du Bois however, an important symptom of this dichotomy is the effect it has in stifling internal criticism and descent, giving rise to what he describes as a "moral hesitancy that is fatal to self confidence" (1999 [1903]: 127). This is because internal criticism is impeded or sacrificed within the minority group, because the starting point of representation takes the form of a combative defence against societal biases. Du Bois calls these "peculiar problems of inner life" which occur because "our worst side has been so shamelessly



emphasised that we are denying that we ever had a worst side [so that] in all sorts of ways we are hemmed in (ibid).”

### **3.2(b) Diverging strivings and two-ness.**

The second structural factor which Du Bois identifies as contributing to a sense of double consciousness is outlined both in his discussion of different sets of ‘strivings’ or claims upon the public sphere, and *twoness* as a hyphenated identity. These are both quite distinct from the potentially debilitating effects evident in 3.1(a) and 3.2(a), since they, like 3.1(b), provide a resource for something beneficial to both minority and majority and achieved in a new synthesis. This derives from ‘strivings’ or cultural attributes amongst African-Americans who seek to affirm both their American *and* African identities. The following statement, repeated from the passage taken from *Strivings*, tries to sketch this out:

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife...to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed in his face. (Du Bois, 1999 [1903]: 10-11)

Du Bois here is encouraging a reflexive understanding between origin and destination, between what Gilroy (1993) has called ‘roots’ and ‘routes’, and not only arguing that there is space for both, but that both be positively cultivated in an effort to maintain a critical perspective towards a new synthesis or hyphenation. As he put it in another essay, *The Conservation of Races*, from a similar period:

Here, then, is the dilemma, and it is a puzzling one, I admit. No Negro who has given earnest thought to the situation of his people in America has failed, at some time in life, to find themselves at these crossroads; has failed to ask at some time: What, after all, am I? Am I an American or am I a Negro? Can I be both? [...] We are Americans, not only by our birth and citizenship, but by our diverging political ideals... (Du Bois, 2003 [1897]: 24).

This is then an unapologetic objection to forms of cultural assimilation or separatism, strongly endorsing a view that cultural and/or moral diversity may be captured within hyphenated identities.

#### 4. 'Enduring hyphenation'?

Expressions of double consciousness are neither mutually exclusive nor one and the same. By definition they must interact, but are suitably distinctive to be discussed separately. What they all have in common is the sense of an unresolved - but not irresolvable – conflict, anchored in a process of structural and discursive misrecognition. Thus, although formed in a specific context and concerned with the conditions of a particular peoples, it is clear that in many ways Du Boisian conceptions of consciousness are relevant to the contention that socio-cultural self-esteem emerges from forms of group recognition, alongside personal recognition. The relationship between personal and group recognition that is alluded to in Du Bois' account is characterised by the idea that the "inner strife" affecting African-Americans individually is informed by the mastery or dominance possessed by white Americans in depreciating their African-American counterparts. This is captured well in the following passage:

...that nameless prejudice that leaps beyond all this, he stands helpless, dismayed and well-nigh speechless; before that personal disrespect and mockery, the ridicule and systematic humiliation, the distortion of fact and wanton license of fancy, the cynical ignoring of the better and boisterous welcoming of the worse, the all pervading desire to inculcate disdain... (Du Bois, 1999 [1903]: 15).

In this sense, the subject group are more disenfranchised than alienated so that it is not so much cultural *difference* but *cultural disfranchisement* that shapes their struggle. This means that - as outlined in chapter one - institutions and social practices attribute minority status to some inherent qualities in the minority group, as if those qualities were the *reason* rather than the *rationalization* for not taking their sensibilities into account. This leads Du Bois to raise the following question: how can one achieve a mature self-consciousness and an integrity or



wholeness of *self* in an alienating environment? If, in the eyes of another, your humanity is perceived as lacking self-evidential qualities, how do you go about showing its existence?

Self assertion holds many benefits, but for Du Bois – and this is where he differs from some of his contemporaries and later Black Nationalists – overzealous self-assertions appear (a) unnecessarily outwardly threatening, (b) too often draw upon fictitious claims of authenticity, so that (c) they are, in the end, counter productive. To openly plead for respect on the other hand would effectively forfeit any self-respect in the process. The solution that Du Bois points to is not one of abandoning the double self but is, instead, to merge the “double self into a better and truer self” – one that does not deny experience and history but seeks to build on it. As Lewis (1993: 281) argues:

The genius of *The Souls of Black Folks* was that it transcended this dialectic in the most obvious way—by affirming it in a permanent tension. Henceforth, the destiny of the race could be conceived as leading neither to assimilation nor separatism but to proud, enduring hyphenation.

This is a kind of multiculturalism in which minorities can espouse a hyphenated identity, contribute and participate equally but not necessarily uniformly. This would not only produce a better America but the ‘better and truer self’ Du Bois thought possible. At the same time, and although Du Bois implies the eventual resolution of this paradox of a divided self in time, much of what he writes simultaneously suggests that African-Americans should accept - and embrace – this contradiction arising from dual consciousness. This is because “living in two worlds at once” furnishes the minority subjectivity with powers to see what the majority are blind to and so, through ‘second sight’, add something to the equation of diversity in the way Parekh (2000) would later describe as an expansion of each other’s horizons of thought and human fulfillment.

#### **4.1. Contemporary theorists of Multiculturalism**

Du Bois is, therefore, trying to reconcile the strivings for group recognition with more traditional accounts of the nation-state, in an effort to capture a multiculturalism in which cultural and/or moral diversity would be considered an asset. In this sense, he leaves us with the basis of a normative concept in debates advancing an ethic of multiculturalism that

encompasses a pragmatic logic, beginning with a rebuttal of narrow preferences for territorial and cultural congruencies. But where does he sit in relation to contemporary authors that have theorised the contestations of civic-status discussed in chapter one?

The following sections explore this with reference to three prominent thinkers who have made seminal contributions to what May *et al* (2004: 1-19) have described as the “multicultural turn” in recent social and political theory. The selection of only three obviously omits many others of significant standing but, it is argued, that these three in particular share with Du Bois a striking yet overlooked similarity in key aspects of their work. The aim, therefore, is not to offer a descriptive commentary and overview, but to pick out some points of convergence that help further elucidate the operation of double-consciousness for the conceptualisation of Muslim-consciousness in later chapters. For example, how do ideas of difference, diversity and recognition, as they are presented in Du Bois’ contributions contrast with those of Iris Marion Young (1990), Bhikhu Parekh (2000) and Charles Taylor (1994), respectively?<sup>18</sup>

#### 4.2. Iris Marion Young’s ‘difference’.

In her landmark *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Iris Marion Young (1990) presents a series of objections to modes of political incorporation which, as a precondition of being afforded full and unimpaired civic status, require minorities to reject their own particularity in a process of cultural assimilation to the dominant norms, values and customs of that society or polity. In Young’s view such a requirement is unjust because “assimilation always implies coming to the game after it is already begun, after the rules and standards have been set, and having to prove oneself accordingly” (1990: 165). Although Young argues that there are different types of assimilation which can seek to assimilate different things, what they all share in common is the disproportionate burden of change that they place upon the minority.

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<sup>18</sup> It would be impossible to try to offer a detailed account of each thinker’s sophisticated arguments. Given the enormous influence of their work, secondary accounts are widespread and range in quality. For a general but critical reading of Taylor, see Appiah (2005) and Bauman (2000, chapter six), for Young, see Faulks (2000) and for Parekh see Modood (2005). For a critique of each see Barry (2001).



Assimilation is certainly an obstacle to the sorts of strivings imagined by Du Bois, memorably objected to by his belief that the African-Americans would not 'bleach' their "Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism", for, with their message for the world, they simply wish to make it possible for "to be both a negro and an American." This is a good example of *twoness* as an expression of 'enduring hyphenation' which contests the singularity of a civic status that cannot, for example, incorporate the public recognition of identities marked by 'difference'.<sup>19</sup>

Young's work is a response to the view that citizenship achieved through individual rights alone, based upon blindness to difference, can satisfy principles of social justice by, for example, relegating differences to the private realm in favor of equal treatment in the public sphere. By drawing attention to the context of groupings that are founded upon non-voluntary aspects of social identity, she points to the disproportionate impact of past domination or present disadvantage. She thus argues that focusing upon individuals ignores how citizenship already fails to treat people equally, or where "blindness to group difference disadvantages groups whose experience, culture and socialized capacities differ from those of privileged groups" (ibid. 165). Not being attentive to group differences can, therefore, lead to a form of oppression in itself and/or can contribute to further oppression:

...by allowing norms expressing the point of view and experiences of privileged groups to appear neutral and universal. [...] Because there is no such unsituated group-neutral point of view, the situation and experience of dominant groups tends to define the norms of any such humanity in general. Against such a supposedly neutral humanist ideal, only the oppressed groups come to be marked with particularity; they, and not the privileged groups, are marked, objectified as the Others (Young, 1990: 165).

It is striking how, in holding this view, she offers a similar objection to the idea of neutrality presented by Du Bois in his account of the operation of the *veil*. Since "privileged groups implicitly define the standards according to which all will be measured...their privilege involves not recognizing these standards as culturally and experientially specific (Young, 1990: 165). If we recall, the Du Boisian *veil* imagines that those who are 'veiled' become

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<sup>19</sup> This point is elaborated upon later but it is worth mentioning here that it includes such things as greater inclusion in expressions of national belonging, culturally relevant educational provisions or group-specific legal protections.

marked by dominant society as deviating from the 'norm', while those in front of it may not see anything other than their own rightful mastery or dominance. It was argued that this presents an inverted version of the Rawlsian 'veil of ignorance', for what such an understanding means for Young, like Du Bois, is that the minority looks out from behind a socially constructed disparity, in full knowledge of critical aspects of their identity. By the very nature of this state of affairs, where past dominance informs contemporary disparities in power, she argues that it is periodically raised to a conscious level:

When participation is taken to imply assimilation, the oppressed person is caught in an irresolvable dilemma: to participate means to accept or adopt an identity one is not, to try to participate means to be reminded by oneself and others of the identity one is (Young: *ibid.*).

This double consciousness, this sense of looking at oneself through the eyes of another, accords with Du Bois' view that self recognition is a form of cultural recognition which, necessarily, sees one's own cultural identity in connection with the cultural identities of other members of one's community. Hence, the injuries suffered from prejudice are not merely due to the overt hostility from the majority, but also arise from minority invisibility in not being recognised or represented as a legitimate constituent of society. This links to Young's complaint that it is an unhelpful liberal fetishism to presuppose that a person can be detached from the contingent aspects of their social identity, history and culture.

These separate points are nicely drawn together by her advocacy of the institutional incorporation of group identities into a democratic cultural pluralism, one that can reconcile a general system of rights that is the same for all, and a more specific system of group-conscious policies such that

...a democratic public should provide mechanisms for the effective recognition and representation of the distinct voices and perspectives of those of its constituent groups that are oppressed or disadvantaged. Such group representation implies institutional mechanisms and public resources supporting (1) self organisation of group members so that they achieve collective empowerment and a reflective understanding of their collective experience and interests in the context of society; (2) group analysis and group generation of proposals in institutionalised contexts where decision makers have taken group perspectives into consideration... (*ibid.*: 184).



This is a particularly ‘thick’ advocacy of policies capable of instantiating the recognition and inclusion of minorities in a reorganized public sphere with the aim of preventing minorities from being further frozen out or overwhelmed by majorities. Although it is expressed in a less technical fashion, the maintenance and promotion of such plural constituencies is similarly championed by Bhikhu Parekh and is expressed in his *Rethinking Multiculturalism*.

#### 4.3. Bhikhu Parekh’s ‘diversity’.

There is a great deal in this offering and what is of most concern to this discussion probably captures the main thrust of Parekh’s argument within this text as elsewhere. This is that cultural diversity and social pluralism are of an intrinsic value because they challenge people to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their own cultures and ways of life. This distinguishes him from liberals and communitarians. The latter might recognise that cultures can play an important role in making choices meaningful for their members (Kymlicka, 1995), or play host to the development of the *self* for the members of that culture (Tully, 1995), or that different cultures increase autonomy by providing further ‘options’ in ways of living for society as a whole (Raz, 1986). However, while such arguments suggest that culture is important for individual group members, they do not succeed in explaining why cultural diversity is necessary in itself. To this Parekh offers the following explanation:

Since human capacities and values conflict, every culture realizes a limited range of them and neglects, marginalizes and suppresses others. However rich it may be, no culture embodies all that is valuable in human life and develops the full range of human possibilities. Different cultures thus correct and complement each other, expand each other’s horizon of thought and alert each other to new forms of human fulfillment. The value of other cultures is independent of whether or not they are options for us... inassimilable otherness challenges us intellectually and morally, stretches our imagination, and compels us to recognize the limits of our categories of thought (Parekh, 2000: 167).

Thus there is an active promotion of cultural difference here, a clear argument in favour of diversity in and of itself which complements an over-arching Du Boisian prescription. This emerges in Du Bois’ sense of the need for African-Americans to develop their “traits and talents” so that “someday on American soil two-races may give each to each those characteristics both sadly lack” (1999 [1903]: 9-10).

Du Bois believed that moral truths are discovered as members of a culture reflect on their particular historical experiences, and this idea sustained his insistence that different peoples discover different moral truths. Much like Parekh, Du Bois' position is not an orthodox liberal one that argues people have a right to pursue their own conceptions of the good, and that if the state neglects them benignly, rather than intervening coercively, then each state is likely to house many different cultures. Nor is it that Du Bois believes exposure to other ways of life increases the choice of options available to all in a society. His argument is rather that, because each culture has something to teach others, people should be allowed to cultivate moral and aesthetic insights for humanity as a whole. This is supported by his call to African-Americans to fulfil their "duty" and "maintain their race identity [because they] have a contribution to make to civilisation and humanity which no other race can make". This is not limited to African-Americans, however; this is an issue of plurality as a consequence of particularity. What is being advocated is both a deepening of cultural particularities and a broadening of these insights from different cultures. This is something that sits comfortably with Parekh's (2000: 167-168) view that cultural diversity is an objective good since it "fosters...human freedom as self-knowledge, self-transcendence and self criticism."

#### 4.4. Charles Taylor's 'recognition'

The conception of recognition that emerges from both Parekh and Young's thesis, however, is most recognisable in Charles Taylor's (1994) account of the emergence of a modern politics of identity. In this Taylor suggests that the idea of 'recognition' as we understand it today has developed out of a move away from conceiving historically defined or inherited hierarchies as the sole provenance of social status or honour (in the French sense of *préférence*), and towards a notion of dignity more congruent with the ideals of a democratic society or polity, one more likely to confer political equality and a full or unimpaired civic



status upon all its citizens.<sup>20</sup> Drawing upon his previous, densely catalogued account of the emergence of the modern self (Taylor, 1989b), he maps the political implications of this move onto two cases of Equality. The first is the most familiar and is characterised as a rights-based politics of universalism, with the prospect of affording equal dignity to all citizens in a polity; and the second denotes a politics of difference where the uniqueness of context, history and identity is salient and potentially ascendant.

For Taylor, this coupling crystallises the way in which the concept of recognition has given rise to a search for 'authenticity'. This is characterised as a move away from the prescriptive universalisms that have historically underwritten ideas of the Just or the Right, in favour of the fulfilment and realisation of one's true self, originality or worth. That is why, according to Taylor, people can no longer be recognised on the basis of identities determined from their positions in social hierarchies alone but, rather, through taking account of the real manner in which people form their identities. The interface between these two issues - dignity and difference - forms the basis of Taylor's account of the politics of recognition, expressed as a dialogical interlocutor.

So how does this relate to Du Bois? In the first instance, Taylor's emphasis on the importance of 'dialogical' relationships rehearses Du Bois' view that it is a mistake to suggest that, in Taylor's terms, people form their identities 'monologically' or without an intrinsic dependence upon dialogue with others. We have seen how Du Bois expresses this process, and Taylor (1994: 33) characterises it in a similar manner, arguing that we define our identity "always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us". Here Taylor is openly drawing upon Hegel who, if we recall, suggests that our idea of ourselves, what we claim to be, and what we really think we are, can be dependent upon how others come to view us to the extent that our sense of *self* is developed in a continuing dialogue. Self-consciousness exists "only by being acknowledged or recognised", and the related implication for Taylor, just like Du Bois, is that a sense of socio-cultural self-

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<sup>20</sup> Thus making equal recognition an essential part of democratic culture, a point not lost on Habermas (1994: 113) who argues that "a correctly understood theory of [citizenship] rights requires a politics of recognition that protects the individual and the life contexts in which his or her identity is formed".

esteem emerges not only from personal identity, but also in relation to the group in which this identity is developed. This is expressed at the beginning of Taylor's account that

....our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Non recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning some in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (1994: 25-26).

We return to the idea of a mode of being in the next chapter through reference to Modood's (1992) elaboration of the distinction between modes of 'being' and 'oppression', but it is worth noting here how Taylor's concerns rests on the need to prevent the outcome described in the first part of Du Bois' concept, namely (3.1a) an internalisation by a minority of the contempt a majority hold for them. Less directly, but equally present, is the thrust of the second part (3.1b) which referred to the creation of an additional perspective to which this experience might lend itself, as is evident in Taylor's characterisation of liberalism as a 'fighting creed' and what this means to the being fought:

Liberalism is not a possible meeting ground for all cultures, and quite incompatible with other ranges. ...[A]s many Muslims are well aware, Western liberalism is not so much an expression of the secular, postreligious outlook that happens to be popular amongst liberal *intellectuals* as a more organic outgrowth of Christianity... All this is to say that liberalism is also a fighting creed (Taylor, 1994: 62).

What Taylor is drawing our attention to here is "a particularism masquerading as the universal" (ibid. 43). Simultaneously, he identifies the limitations of his own conception of recognition politics, concluding that the boundaries marking the legitimacy of recognition politics must be drawn somewhere, and that nowhere is more appropriate than on issues of Muslim claims-making. This is necessary, Taylor argues, because in Islam "there is no question of separating politics and religion in the way we have come to expect in Western liberal society" (ibid. 62). Whether this sort of exclusivity in predetermined notions of incompatibility masks a complex partiality or whether it represents legitimate caution is examined in chapters five and six through the empirical case-studies of anti-discrimination Muslim and educational claims-making. What, nevertheless, emerges here is Taylor's divergence from a Du Boisian idea of recognition, since the latter is more genuinely



dialogical and does not seek *a priori* to exclude some minority claims-making from the process of politics.

Is it therefore fair to query the extent to which Muslim-consciousness is disproportionately objectified by liberalism's 'fighting' creed? Like Hegel's master, could Taylor's conception of recognition be guilty of the same sleight of hand that is only ever revealed when recognition is replaced by coercion? These questions are pertinent to each of the following chapters and continue into the conclusion which traces out the relationship between Muslim-consciousness and the civic status that Muslims in Britain are afforded.

## 5. Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter has been to unpack and explore what Du Boisian ideas of double consciousness mean, why they are of value and worth redeeming, and where they sit in relation to some other, more recent, ideas in the areas of multiculturalism and recognition. It is argued that Du Bois' concept is premised upon the idea that a consciousness *for itself* is characterised by an active mobilisation, one that is striving to be recognised, but one that turns inward and becomes a double consciousness when it is benignly ignored or malignly coerced. Double consciousness thus captures the dual character of unrecognised minority subjectivities and their transformative potential, alongside the conditions of impaired civic status that are sometimes allocated to minorities by mainstream society. The rationale behind revisiting Du Bois is not, however, to present a pathology of Muslim subjectivity as incompatible or in conflict with the sorts of civic status conferred by the types of British multiculturalism surveyed in chapter one. Quite the opposite. Du Bois' concept is used to probe the dilemmas facing Muslim minorities who aspire to be full participants in British society. This can be characterised as a schema which becomes progressively 'thicker' in capturing (a) the political dimension in which British-Muslim subjectivity is formed, (b) the nature and form of this subjectivity *in* and *for* itself, alongside (c) the transformative potential it heralds for society as a whole. This includes an examination of both the conflicting accounts evident in the construction of the *self*, and the grounds on which racial and ethnic

minorities who are subject to exclusionary discourses can strive for political recognition and incorporation.

To this end, the preceding discussion has assumed a great deal about the importance of groupings in overcoming or merging these doubles into better and truer selves, whether this is found in 'enduring hyphenation' or *twoness* or something else. The next chapter scrutinises the idea of groupings with more sociological rigour; tracing the genealogical shift from race to the emergence of religion as a salient marker of difference. The implications this holds for conceptualising Muslim-consciousness are traced back to the varieties and stages of consciousness delineated throughout this chapter by Du Bois, specifically the movement from a self-consciousness *in* itself to the transformative potential of a self-consciousness *for* itself: from one's historically *ascribed* identity to one's politically *self-constructed* identity. It will be argued that this allows us to theorise conceptions of Muslim-consciousness in later chapters as representing part of an attempt to pluralise the mainstream and seek reciprocity as co-members of a polity.



## Chapter Three

### **Race to religion: the cultural politics of race, ethnicity and ‘group’ categories in the emergence of Muslim-consciousness.**

#### **1. Introduction**

Chapter two ended by acknowledging the importance of groupings in overcoming or merging the duality of double-consciousness into an ‘enduring hyphenation’; a *twoness*, or a further expression of synthesised identity. This chapter scrutinises the politics of groupings with more sociological rigour; tracing the genealogical shift from race to the emergence of religion as a salient marker of difference in specifically understanding how expressions of British-Muslim identity have developed. Such an exploration is necessary because, as the following evaluation of conceptions of minority identity in Britain details, the category of ‘Muslim’ has only relatively recently assumed the prominence we are familiar with today.<sup>1</sup> This is partly due to the disrupting heterogeneity of ethnic, regional and linguistic backgrounds that have historically made up the constituency of Muslims in Britain.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> According to the 2001 census data, there are at least 1.6 million people in the United Kingdom who report an affiliation with Islam by voluntarily self-defining as ‘Muslim’. This represents 2.9 per cent of the entire population and makes Islam the most populous faith in Britain after Christianity (72 per cent); more numerous than Hinduism (less than 1 per cent, numbering 559, 000), Sikhism (336, 000), Judaism (267, 000) and Buddhism (152, 000). Of the Muslim constituency, 42.5 percent are of Pakistani ethnic-origin, 16.8 per cent Bangladeshi, 8.5 per cent of Indian, and – most interestingly – 7.5 per cent of White Other. This is largely taken to mean people of Turkish, Arabic and North-African ethnic origin who tick White Other on the census form. It also includes East European Muslims from Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as white Muslims from the New Europe. Black-African (6.2), Other Asian (5.8) and British (4.1) dominate the remaining categories of ethnic identification in the census options. Even with this heterogeneity, it is still understandable – if regrettable - that British-Muslims are associated first and foremost with a South-Asian background, especially since those with this background make up roughly 68 per cent of the British Muslim population, have a greater longevity in residence, and have been more politically active to date.

<sup>2</sup> Something which has invited Humayan Ansari (2004: 3) to argue that, “presumptions of Muslim homogeneity and coherence which claim to override the differences between rural and urban, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, do not necessarily correspond to social reality. A Sylheti from Bangladesh, apart from some tenets of faith, is likely to have little in common with a Mirpuri from Pakistan, let alone a Somali or Bosnian Muslim”. This is complemented by Fred Halliday’s (1999: 897) concern to focus analysis upon “the intersection of identities” since “it is easy to...study an immigrant community and present all in terms of religion. But this is to miss other identities – of work, location, ethnicity - and, not least, the ways in which different Muslims relate to each other. Anyone with the slightest acquaintance of the inner life of the Arabs in Britain, or the Pakistani and Bengali communities, will know there is as much difference as commonality”. Whilst these concerns are undoubtedly legitimate, and should help counter an understanding of Muslims in Britain as a monolithic group, the argument of this chapter is that certain concerns transcend ethnic or linguistic difference [particularly since the majority, albeit a slim majority, of British-Muslims have not migrated



What it perhaps also reflects is a hesitation to recognise that religious affiliation might provide an equally legitimate source for identity articulations akin to race, class and gender (Modood, 1994), particularly in what many sociologists like to believe is, by definition, a secularist discipline investigating a largely secular society (cf McLennan, 2007, 2006). As Statham (2005: 164-5) has argued:

Much migration research has maintained a built-in interpretative bias that has led scholars to see religious identification as a backward or reactionary form of 'false consciousness' simply masking objectives and interests that are actually 'secular'. Migrant religions with strange rituals and odd customs have been particularly vulnerable. They are so far removed from most academics' life-worlds that it is easy to see how they have been dismissed as reactionary relics to be swept away by a superior secular civic-culture.<sup>3</sup>

Referring only to the South Asian (but largest) Muslim contingent, Yunus Samad (1992: 508) captures this tendency in his observation that "the groups which are now designated as British Muslims have also been studied by sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists as black, working class, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Mirpuri, Sylheti etc."

- **One of the key arguments of this chapter is that such a shift in semantics reflects important internal developments, specifically the fruition of a tangible Muslim-consciousness amongst Muslim communities themselves.**

It remains the case, however, that until the debates generated by the Rushdie Affair (discussed in sec 8-8.1) and, more dramatically, since the post-9/11 securitisation of ethnic relations (Fekete, 2004), sociological inquiry has displayed little interest in the religious facet of identity construction amongst minority groups in Britain. It has instead concentrated upon juxtapositions between geographies of ethnic origin and localities of birth (Gilroy, 1987,

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to Britain but have been born here]. For example, shared concerns are likely to encompass the ways in which to combat anti-Muslim racism, or cultivate a positive public image (heterogeneous or otherwise), or a desire amongst some Muslim parents to expose their children to Islamic perspectives and so on.

<sup>3</sup> Another study might ask, for example, why it is little recognised that Muslims became the first non-Judea-Christians to set up places of worship in Britain as long ago as 1900 (Ansari, 2004), or why the desecration of the Al Asqsa mosque in the Israeli occupied Arab sector of Jerusalem in 1969, managed to provoke more protest from Muslims in Britain at the time, than the incendiary speeches of Enoch Powell (Hiro, 1991). This is augmented by the finding that whilst first generation post-immigrant organisations such as the Pakistani Workers Association (PWA) were concerned with organised workers' representation, one of their highest priorities was to secure funds to build Mosques (Meer, 2001). One of the questions directly addressed in this chapter builds upon these others, asking why, whilst coping with being "the most socially deprived and racially harassed group", Muslims in Britain were moved to campaign against the publication of a novel by Salman Rushdie (Modood, 1992: 261)?



1993; Alexander, 2000), and the implications for a particular secular hybrid identity therein (Hall, 1991).

At the same time, these conceptualisations themselves have marked a shift away from a focus upon coalition (Sivannandan, 1982; CCCS, 1982) and anti-racist or race-class identities (Miles, 1982), which developed in response to race-relations perspectives (Banton, 1967; Rex, 1973) and which dominated discussion of minority identity in Britain throughout most of the 1980s. Traditional-class based analysis of ethnic and racial minorities, meanwhile, has been subjected to significant feminist critique (Carby, 1982; Parmar, 1982; Brah, 1996), particularly with regards to education (Mirza, 1992) and, more recently, in response to concerns over South-Asian religious patriarchy (WAF, 1991; Saghal and Yuval-Davis, 1992).

In addition, other influential British approaches have sought to examine minority ethnic experiences through a cultural studies lens (Hall *et al* 1978; Hebdige, 1979; CCCS, 1982; Gilroy, 1987), famously heralding the idea of ‘new ethnicities’ (Hall, 1988), and promoting concepts of ‘diaspora’ (Gilroy, 1993; Bhabha, 1994). Others, meanwhile, have adopted a social anthropological gaze by focusing upon family, kinships or *braderi* (Shaw, 1987; Werbner, 1990, 1994, 2004) and ‘transnationalism’ (Vertovec, 1997), among south Asian post-immigrant groups in particular.

- **Quite how, if at all, this diverse inquiry can inform an understanding of Muslim-consciousness in Britain remains unclear. This chapter addresses this question at a general level by examining the ways in which minority identities have historically been conceptualised and, more specifically, by locating the extent and distribution of a Muslim-consciousness within these conceptualisations.**

To this end, the chapter begins by critically examining hitherto widely accepted relationships between specific terms and concepts describing Islam, Muslims, and identity. This is followed by a brief consideration of the difference between an adopted or chosen Muslim identity. Here, it is suggested that a willingness to protect the bearers of some identities, and not others, from discrimination because they are deemed ‘involuntary’ is problematic, not

least because the logic invoked proceeds through the operation of a normative grammar of race. This is because the dominance of the current formulations of un-chosen ethnic minority identities is mediated by a race-relations tradition that is subject to omissions and has been informatively critiqued by race-coalition and racialization positions.

The fuller implications of this critique emerge in Part B of this chapter, which turns its attention to ideas of ethnicity, anti-racism and agency, with specific reference to the Rushdie Affair. The second half of this chapter critically evaluates the validity of Muslim 'group' identities as embodying a fruition of Muslim-consciousness in Britain, before connecting this to the preceding discussion and then looking forward to chapter four

- **It is argued that Muslim-consciousness is the most suitable conceptual category for comprehending identity mobilisations informed by Muslim identities: a conclusion that is elaborated and illustrated in the remainder of the thesis.**

## **2. Conceptions of Islam and Muslim-consciousness**

It would be fair to say that academic and public discourse on British-Muslims can use the descriptive terms 'Islam' and 'Muslim' in ways that assume they have been operationalised so that we intuitively understand what they mean and represent. Yet, like many other concepts, once unravelled and problematised, it becomes clear they host a variety of meanings. It would, therefore, be helpful to unpack these terms by asking some obvious questions about what Islam denotes and what *being* Muslim entails. Oliver Roy's (2004) account of *Globalised Islam* begins in this way:

Who do we call Muslim? A mosque-goer, the child of Muslim parents, somebody with a specific ethnic background (an Arab, a Pakistani), or one who shares with another a specific culture? What is Islam? A set of beliefs based on a revealed book, a culture linked to historical civilisation? A set of norms and values that can be adapted to different cultures? An inherited legacy based on a common origin? (Roy, 2004: 21)

A robust account of Islamic history, civilisation and comparative ethnic relations is beyond the scope of this thesis, and definitive and categorical definitions are neither sought nor - it will be argued - a reflection of how Muslims view themselves and Islam. A more modest and relevant exposition could begin by exploring what we mean when we talk about Islam: is it



solely a religion whose first prophet was Adam and last prophet was Mohammed; or is it a state of peace achieved through surrender to God, or is it a political and cultural movement? What is meant by the phrase that 'Islam is a way of life'? And can we distinguish Islam as a name of a religion, from the adjective 'Islamic', the noun 'Muslim'? To begin to answer these questions abstractly, Ahmet Karamustafa (2004: 108) encourages us to approach our conception of Islam by viewing it as a civilisational project comprising

...a sprawling civilizational edifice under continuous construction and renovation in accordance with multiple blueprints (these are the numerous Islamic cultures at local, regional, and national levels encompassing innumerable individual, familial, ethnic, racial, and gender identities) all generated from a nucleus of key ideas and practices ultimately linked to the historical legacy of the Prophet Mohammed.

With this enormous stress upon heterogeneity, how - *in tangible terms* - can we derive an understanding of Muslim identity? Karamustafa (ibid) suggests that we should begin by focusing on what this nucleus of ideas represents

Minimally...we can assume a set of beliefs (a version each of monotheism, prophecy, genesis, and eschatology) that underwrite a set of values (dignity of human life, individual and collective rights and duties, the necessity of ethical human conduct – in short, a comprehensive moral program), in turn reflected in a set of concrete human acts (ranging from the necessity of greeting others to acts of humility like prayer).

On a day-to-day basis we can find these ideas articulated in Islamic rituals and practices, where Muslims are reminded through the practice of the pillars of Islam - *Iman* (articles of faith), *salat* (daily prayer), *zakat* (charity), *sawm* (fasting during Ramadan) and *hajj* (pilgrimage) - that actions that are deeply spiritual are not devoid of politics. In this way Islam - comprising the beliefs, values, rights and duties emphasised by Karamustafa - is lived rather than simply practiced. As Dilwar Hussain (2005: 39) of the Islamic Foundation notes:

The congregational prayer is often held as an example of a community in harmony with believers standing in rows and functioning with one body. Fasting and charity sensitise the believers to those who lead less fortunate lives and make the war against global poverty a vivid reality. The pilgrimage symbolises equality and the breaking of barriers between nations, classes and tongues.

Is this, then, the most appropriate definition of what being a Muslim entails, i.e. that participation is necessitated in some or all of the above practices if one is to consider oneself a Muslim? The argument presented here is that this is not the case. Instead, it is argued that the relationship between Islam and a Muslim identity might be analogous to the relationship

between the categorisation of one's sex and one's gendered identity.<sup>4</sup> That is, one may be biologically female or male in a narrow sense of the definition, but one may be a woman or man in multiple, overlapping and discontinuous ways. This requires some explanation, particularly since one's sex reflects something that emerges on a continuum that can be either - or both - internally defined or externally ascribed. This analogy potentially allows a range of factors other than religion (such as ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, and agnosticism) to shape Muslim identities (see also Meer, 2008 and 2007a). To interrogate these distinctions, we should begin by looking at the most obvious sources of Muslim identity.

### 2.1. Is Muslim identity a prescriptive religiosity defined by scriptures?

In terms of religiosity, Muslim identity might be derived from doctrinal subscription to the *shahada* (the belief that there is only one God and that Mohammed is the Messenger), which in turn would inform a sense of *Ibadat* (religious worship or duty). The implications of this have been examined in the work of the Muslim feminist, Katherine Bullock (2002: 154), who concludes that, although "linguistically a 'Muslim' is someone who submits to the will of God", this clarifies little since the question then becomes to what exactly is a Muslim submitting: "To traditional practice? To unambiguous, or ambiguous text? To certain scholars' interpretations of text?" (ibid.). The answer Bullock offers begins with the Qur'an and its different interpretations. Importantly, Bullock argues that the companions of the Prophet Mohammed, scholars of *tafsir* (explanation of the Qu'ran) and the *fuqaha* (legalists/lawyers) have always disagreed over the meaning of its verses which is why

no one interpretation has been held to be authoritative. Naturally, too, the interpretation, while guided by the rules of Arabic grammar, the spirit of Islam, and the

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<sup>4</sup> It should be stressed that this distinction is problematic, but is adopted as a heuristic device to develop this particular point. For example, in her landmark *Gender Trouble*, Butler (1990) argues that any coherence achieved within categories of sex, gender, and sexuality does in fact reflect a culturally constructed mirage of coherence that is achieved through the repetition of what she calls 'stylised acts'. She argues that, in their repetition, these acts establish the appearance of what she describes as an essential or ontological 'core' gender. This leads Butler to consider one's 'sex' – along with one's 'gender' and 'sexuality' – as being 'performative', and since this challenges biological accounts of sexual binaries, it is recognised that Butler would both support *and* problematise the above analogy. That is, whilst she may support it by agreeing with the contested nature of 'gender', she might also problematise it by rejecting 'sex' as something given – rather than produced.



example of the Prophet (that is, how he himself implemented the Qu'ranic injunctions) also depends upon an individual's own judgement. *Context does count* (ibid. 154 emphasis added).

The role of context in interpretation is nowhere better exemplified than by the Qu'ranic position on homosexuality. It is often assumed that Islam is wholly opposed to homosexuality: an understanding supported by the routine oppression of gays and lesbians in some Muslim countries. According to some contemporary Islamacist jurists (cf Al-Haqq Kugle, 2004; Bauhdiba, 1998; Mahmud, 1998), however, such oppression is a contextual construction reflecting the prejudices and pre-understanding of heterosexual men and women who seek to promote 'hetero-normative' positions. Although the Qu'ran does assume a heterosexual norm amongst its readers, it is important to recognise, argues Al-Haqq Kugle (2004: 200-1), that the Qu'ran

...contains no word that means "homosexuality" (as an abstract idea denoting the sexuality of men who desire pleasure with other men or a sexuality of women who desire pleasure with other women)... the terms that became popular in Arabic in later times [*Liwat* for the relations and *Luti* for the people] are not found in the Qu'ran at all... [and] the Qu'ran does not specify any punishment for sexual acts between two men and women.

The intention here is not to re-claim the Qu'ran as a manifesto for Gay rights,<sup>5</sup> although Al-Haqq Kugle certainly adopts it as such in the context of a broader Islamic-humanist framework, but simply that Bullock is undoubtedly correct to emphasise the contextual and situational nature of interpreting what Islam requires. Again, this point is lucidly made by Kugle when he argues that

Commentators and jurists have drawn analogies and presented arguments to conclude that the Qu'ran addresses sexually unusual people [sociologists who write in Arabic had to create new words to define homosexuality and settled on *al-shudhudh al-jinsi* which means "sexually rare or unusual"] despite the Qu'ran's lack of a term for them or the actions that characterise them. Those are, however, arguments of jurists and commentators; they are not the words of the Qu'ran itself (Al-Haqq Kugle, 2004: 200).

This throws up another interesting issue of interpretation since, unlike the Bible but not unlike the Torah, the Qu'ran is not popularly read in vernacular languages. This means that Muslims

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<sup>5</sup> I share with Ebrahim Moosa (2004: 122) the view that arguing that "Muslims can act confidently in the present *only* if the matter in question was already prefigured in the past" suggests a "profound lack of dynamism [in] the state of Muslim self-confidence in the modern period" (emphasis added).

in Britain, as around the world, often read it in classical Arabic in the way that the Bible tended to be read in Latin throughout pre-Reformation Europe. In addition, it is important to note that, although the Qu'ran provides a written source of theological literature, Islam also displays a strong communal-oral tradition, in both practice and scripture, which means that Qu'ranic verses are often recited aloud and in group settings, and not simply read silently.<sup>6</sup>

In Bullock's (2002: 155) next attempt to outline what prescriptive Islam requires, she turns to the *Sunnah*, which accounts for "what the Prophet said, did, and observed others doing but did not comment on". This is believed to be preserved in the *Hadith* and, in particular, in the *Sirah*, which is akin to a biography of the Prophet Mohammed and is found in the Qu'ran. However, because the *Hadith* are subject to a number of interpretative controversies, given that they were written after the life of the Prophet and are variously classified as "authentic, good, weak, and fabricated" (ibid), Bullock argues that up until the nineteenth century, Islam recognised

...other sources of law after the Qu'ran and Sunnah, including the actions and opinions of the Companions of the Prophet, the generation after them, juristic consensus, local customs...analogical reasoning, considerations of the public good, and so on [...] Because the early scholars recognised that there was no way of adjudicating between differing reasonable interpretations of the Qu'ran and Sunnah, the understanding between them developed that no matter what the differences in legal opinion, each was said to be correct (ibid.)

The implication is that - no less than with any other text - the Qu'ran offers guidance that is interpreted and applied by human agents, as Omid Safi (2004: 22) reminds us: "in all cases, the dissemination of the Divine teachings is achieved through human agency. Religion is always mediated". Hence, competing accounts of religiously-informed Muslim identities can simultaneously be held without necessarily invalidating one another.

## 2.2. Is Muslim identity a sociological category?

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<sup>6</sup> The implication of this strong oral tradition is returned to later in the discussion, specifically with reference to Samad's (1998) description of tendencies in the gravitation away from an oral tradition that is seeped in cultural custom, to a literal decoding of Qu'ranic scripture that eschews sectarian or ecclesiastical differences in favour of an Islamic universalism.



What is being argued is that in contrast to the scriptural conception, we could view Muslim identity as a quasi-ethnic sociological formation. 'Quasi' is used to denote something similar but not the same as because, on the one hand, ethnic and religious boundaries continue to interact and are rarely wholly demarcated, hence the term 'ethno-religious' (Modood, 1997: 337). On the other hand, as will become apparent in chapters five and six, the sorts of mobilisations undertaken by Muslims *qua* Muslims, for example against Islamophobia (Meer and Noorani, forthcoming; Meer, 2007b) or in favour of faith schools (Meer, 2007a), mirror the types of mobilisations initiated by other minority groups. Compared to the purely theological variety, this sociological category might be preferred as a less exclusive and more valid way of operationalising Muslim identity because it includes opportunities for self-definition (such as formally on the census or on 'ethnic' monitoring forms (see Aspinall, 2000) or informally in public and media discourse). Equally, it can facilitate the description of oneself as 'Muslim' and take the multiple (overlapping or synthesised) and subjective elements into account independently or intertwined with objective behavioural congruence to the religious practices outlined earlier. It will also be argued that this space for self-definition is a helpful way of conceptualising the difference between racial and ethnic categorisations, in that the former are more likely to be externally imposed and the latter self ascribed, with both potentially becoming more prominent at some times and less at others.

### **2.3. Choosing a Muslim identity?**

Within this process of categorisations, however, just as on a census form or other prescriptive sources, when a category is operationalised and imposed externally, it need not constitute the making of a group identity. As Cornell and Hartman (1997: 20) argue

...others may assign us an ethnic identity, but what they establish by doing so is an ethnic category. It is our own claim to that identity that makes us an ethnic group. The ethnic category is externally defined, but the ethnic group is internally defined.

This emphasises the element of choice in self-definition. For example, one might view Islam as a historical, civilisational edifice that has contributed to modern science and philosophy,

and take pride in this but, simultaneously, disassociate oneself from the religious teachings. This historical or civilisational role of Islam may yet be discarded in favour of the elevation and re-imagining of a particular religious doctrine, or way of being a Muslim, based upon an adherence to articles of divine and confessional faith. It is not the concern of this thesis to ascertain whether the former could legitimately, with recourse to theological reasoning, describe the latter as being in contravention of what Islam requires, or vice-versa. The point is to recognise the pragmatic possibilities that emphasis and dis-emphasis confer upon the bearers of such identification, which includes the recognition that the element of choice is not a total one. By this it is meant that although one may imagine a Muslim identity in different ways, when one is born into a Muslim family one becomes a Muslim. This is not to impose an identity or a way of being onto people who may choose to passively deny or actively reject their Muslim identity because, consistent with the right of self-dissociation, this rejection of Muslim identification (or adoption of a different self-definition) should be recognised where a claim upon it is made.

- **What is instead being argued is that when a Muslim identity is mobilised, it should not be dismissed because it is an identity of personal choice, but rather understood as a mode of classification according to the particular kinds of claims Muslims make for themselves, albeit in various and potentially contradictory ways.**

This means that, just as we do not reject the possibility of self-dissociation, so we must recognise that there are various forms of self-association.

This argument certainly has its critics, and the following statement from the Rt Hon Bob Marshall-Andrews MP captures the most frequent objection to this position. Contrasting it affectively with the chosen/unchosen analogy of sex and gender made earlier, and returning us to the involuntary/voluntary discussion of identity in the work of Young (1990), specifically in how it relates to Du Boisian double consciousness, Marshall-Andrews argues



The difficulty is that there is a profound difference between race and gender and religion. Our race and our gender are what we are and should be protected. Our religion is what we choose to believe. It is a system of beliefs, fundamentally and quite properly held. It seems to many here and out there that there is, in truth, very little distinction between one's religion and one's politics (Hansard, 21 June 2005, column 676).

Contrast this, for example, to Du Bois' argument that the identity others assign us can be a powerful force in shaping our own self-concepts, so that, while our self-consciousness is subjective, it does not free us from the impact of what others say and do. This seems particularly true for minorities at moments of acute objectification, which means that the issue of choosing Muslim identities becomes much less straightforward. As Younge (2005: 31) describes

We have a choice about which identities to give to the floor, but at specific moments they may also choose us. Where Muslim identity is concerned, that moment is now. [...] Singled out for particular interrogation in the west, Muslims have been asked to commit to patriotism, peace at home, war abroad, modernity, secularism, integration, anti-sexism, anti-homophobia, tolerance and monogamy... But Muslims are not being asked to sign up to them because they are good or bad in themselves, but as a pre-condition for belonging in the west at all. No other established community is having its right to live here challenged in a comparable way.

What is most revealing in the contrast between Marshall-Andrews and Younge's comments is the way in which the former adopts a normative grammar of race, whilst the latter points to its constructedness and malleability. While the former recognises it as an involuntary category of birth, since "our race and our gender *are what we are* and should be protected" (emphasis added), the latter sees it as an externally imposed narrative that contributes to an identity which "at specific moments...may also choose us." In one sense, the difference between these two positions can be expressed through different paradigms of thinking about race and difference. Genealogically, the first of these paradigms begins with the ideas of 'race-relations' that have informed legislation designed to outlaw discrimination based on non-voluntary racial and ethnic identities. This is a formulation that is "unique in Europe" (Statham, 2003: 129) and has taken its lead from the American context.

### 3. Race-relations



More precisely, it has its intellectual origins in the work of sociologists and anthropologists who formed part of what has become known as the Chicago School. Working in the early part of the twentieth century, at a time of both European immigration to America as well as internal migration northward from the southern states, sociologists such as Robert Park (1914; 1925; 1950) sought to study race-relations in terms of inter-group processes and “adjustments”, specifically with respect to conflicts over ‘status-claims’ and allocations of resources. An examination of spatial segregation and immigration in the city of Chicago (as a site of urban immigrant settlement), and ‘race consciousness’ amongst African-Americans, who were only one or two generations away from the time of slavery, led Park (1980 [1914]: 36-7) to conclude

In our casual contact with aliens...it is the offensive rather than the pleasing traits that impress us. These impressions accumulate and reinforce natural prejudices. Where races are distinguished by certain external marks these furnish a permanent physical substratum upon which and around which the irritations and animosities, incidental to all human intercourse, tend to accumulate and so gain strength and volume.

The emphasis here is clearly upon an interaction based on prejudice and conflict, and demonstrates an early attempt to analyse the ways in which race became “a relevant social category where cultural and social meanings were attached to the physical traits of a particular social group” (Solomos and Back, 1996: 4). Informed by the broader aim of encouraging group contact and social interaction so that racial conflicts could be mediated or overcome, this perspective advanced a tradition of thinking about race in terms of social relations between people with different physical characteristics. To this Park (1950: 81) later gave the name ‘race-relations’ which he described as

...the relations existing between peoples distinguished by marks of racial descent, particularly when these racial differences enter into the consciousness of the individuals and groups so distinguished, and by so doing determine in each case the individual’s conception of himself as well as his status in the community.

Although not making direct reference to his work, Park’s assessment echoes one of the characteristics of Du Bois’ (1903) concept of double consciousness (though it is worth noting that Park’s portrayal of the interaction between an individuals’ consciousness and their social ‘status’ does not seek to examine the role that discrepancies in power might have in shaping this consciousness). At the same time, it is also true that the Chicago school saw ‘the race



problem' as being one of "integration and assimilation of minorities into the mainstream of a consensus based society" (Berge, 1967: 7). To achieve this, Chicago school scholars squarely located the propensity for problems at the door of cultural-differentiation-risks-incompatibility as an explanatory factor.

This is evident in what Park (1950: 82) describes as the "cycle of race-relations", which moves between the four linear stages of "contact, conflict, accommodation and assimilation." The burden of adapting is entirely carried by the immigrant, wherein failure to assimilate into this "functionalist consensus based view of society" is deemed regressive (Berghe, 1967: 7). In addition, and, to some more importantly (cf Miles, 1982 see this chapter sec 4.), Park may be read as endorsing the erroneous, but commonly held view of 'race' as biologically real. Nevertheless, and the main reason why the preceding discussion is necessary, the formulations of the Chicago School were eagerly adopted elsewhere, not least in Britain.

### 3.1. Race-relations in Britain

The initial post-war labour migration to Britain from former colonies in the West Indies and the Indian subcontinent between 1950 and 1962 was later accompanied by further immigration as families were unified. This was augmented when Asians who had settled in Uganda were evicted, and who voluntarily chose to leave Kenya after independence also migrated to the Britain (sporadically between the mid-sixties and up until the late seventies). During this period a very British take on race-relations was beginning to flourish through the work of Michael Banton (1955; 1959; 1967)<sup>7</sup>, Ruth Glass (1960)<sup>8</sup>, Sheila Patterson (1965; 1969)<sup>9</sup> and E. J. B Rose (1969),<sup>10</sup> who were involved in the then government sponsored Institute for Race-relations (IRR). Their immediate impact was evident when the Labour government introduced measures to prevent discrimination against settled Commonwealth

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Banton: *The Coloured Quarter: Negro Immigrants in an English City* (1955); *White and Coloured* (1959); *Race-relations* (1967).

<sup>8</sup> Ruth Glass (1960) *Newcomers: West Indians in London*.

<sup>9</sup> Sheila Patterson (1965) *Dark Strangers*; (1969) *Immigration and Race-relations in Britain 1960-1967*.

<sup>10</sup> E. J. B Rose: *Colour and Citizenship* (1969).

immigrants (discussed at length in chapter five); it proceeded through the introduction of a Race-Relations Act (1965). Why it was not, for example, called the 'Anti-Racism Act' is unclear, but part of the rationale is undoubtedly the continuation of Parks' assumption that the relations within which such discrimination occurs, must be those of race-relations.

Michael Banton's (1967) book, simply called *Race-relations*, is indicative of this way of thinking and serves as a useful illustration of how problematics in this period were being framed.<sup>11</sup> This is because it shares with the Chicago School a view that race-relations research should be based upon two cornerstones: (i) patterns of interaction and (ii) cultural conflict. Where Banton deviated from the Chicago school, however, was in adopting a global *and* historical perspective to establish 'six orders of race-relations'. These are briefly worth examining because they identify some definitional problems that have since been repeated.

### 3.2. Banton's six orders of race-relations

The first is called 'peripheral contact' and is characterised by interactions between groups that have little or no real influence upon one another, leading to minimal if any change in outlook within groups. An example of such peripheral contact can be found, according to Banton (1967: 68-76), in pygmies of the Ituri forest of central Africa, where goods are exchanged between groups by being left at a trading place independent of each groups' settlement. Such interactions then require little intimate contact and mutual knowledge of customs, habits or language. The second order he termed as 'institutionalised contact', which is achieved when two 'societies' enter into contact "principally through their outlying members" who live on the social boundaries of their respective groups, and so are most qualified to exchange with one another (ibid. 99). This vanguard "may occupy positions in both systems, and a new system of interrelationships develops between groups" (Kitano, 1980: 17). The third occurs as a result of 'acculturation' which, for Banton, heralds the "coming together" or synthesis of different cultures. This might either encourage both groups

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<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that Banton has radically revised these positions. See Banton (2005).



to learn from one another or, depending upon the power relations between groups, lead to the cultural assimilation of the less established group. The fourth order is described as an “integrated order of race-relations” (Banton, 1967: 73), in which racial distinctions are disregarded or only given ‘minor’ consideration. This facilitates interaction on most levels (including housing, schooling, employment, social relationships) so that, “race has less significance than the individual’s occupation and his other status conferring roles”. After this there is the order of ‘pluralism’, which is understood by Banton as referring to “separatism” amongst groups who live side by side, but wish to preserve their differences in culture, with a minimum of social interaction, integration or assimilation. Unlike the order of ‘peripheral’ contact, ‘pluralism’, for Banton, involves a knowing choice to self-segregate in order to maintain group boundaries, and is not a ‘natural’ but a forced order of race-relations. His final order is that of ‘domination’, which can develop out of the idea pluralism, when power relations between groups are radically unequal, and where, based upon racial criteria, members of one category are subordinate to the other and are responded to, not as individuals, but as representative of a category.

Banton’s typology has been widely criticised from different quarters that seek to undermine both his starting point as well as the broader project of race-relations as he sees it. With reference to the internal consistency of the schema itself, Philip Mason (1971: 60) has argued that Banton’s definitions break down as soon as we begin to trace a progress from one race-relations ‘order’ to another

Muslim rule in India was, I suppose, domination merging into pluralism, but what about British rule in India? This was, first, institutionalised contact with the servants of the East India Company acting as specialised go-betweens; later, it was paternalism perhaps the most perfect example of paternalism there has ever been. But it ended not in integration but in withdrawal. Again, in Rhodesia, in the Cape Colony, Mexico and Peru, there was first some control by the home government but independence meant...something nearer to domination. It might, I suppose, be argued that the arrival of West Indians, Pakistanis, and Indians in Britain produced a situation in which acculturation was taking place, but with some doubt as to whether it would turn into integration or unequal pluralism.

Mason’s point is that Banton ignores the “shifting and intricate patterns” (ibid.) of minority-majority relations, because the lived experiences compromise his overly general formulations.



This is not the most wounding of criticisms, however, and could equally be made against a great deal of theoretical work. A more important criticism is that Banton is so dependent upon anthropological work with tribal societies, that it encourages race-relations analysis to think of *racial differences in terms of cultural manifestations of difference* experienced in neat, bounded-units-as-groups. This is arguably why he mischaracterizes the idea of ‘pluralism’, describing it as something closer to separate development or ‘apartheid’, and why it is so at odds with how it is understood by Du Bois, Young or Parekh, as the previous chapter discussed (4-4.4). Thirdly, Banton appears to conflate ideas of what constitutes a ‘group’ with ‘society’ and so is unable to comprehend the implication of different ethnic groups belonging to a single polity. This has obvious implications for the analysis of minorities in culturally heterogeneous societies and also for ideas of what constitutes a civic-status amongst *the nation* in accounts of *the nation-state* in the way set out in chapter one (1.1-2). Moreover, it is unclear as to what comprises a ‘culture’, a ‘group’, or a ‘society’ in his account above, since Banton uses these terms interchangeably and without clear definition.

### 3.3. John Rex; Status and Party

Some of these issues were addressed in John Rex’s (1967; 1973; 1979 1983; 1986) contribution to the race-relations problematic.<sup>12</sup> Rex deviates from Banton in two important ways. First, he is keen to stress the socio-political rather than the anthropological context of ‘relations’ and, second, he adopts a less global and trans-historical approach

Race-relations...refers to situations in which two or more groups with distinct identities and recognisable characteristics are forced by economic and political circumstances to live together in a society. Within this they refer to situations in which there is a high degree of conflict between the groups and in which ascriptive criteria are used to mark out the members of each group in order that one group may pursue one of a number of some hostile policies against the other. Finally, within this group of situations true

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<sup>12</sup> John Rex: *Race, Colonialism and the City* (1973); *Race-relations in Sociological Theory* (1983); *Race and Ethnicity* (1986); with Moore *Race, Community and Conflict* (1967); with Sally Tomlinson *Colonial Immigrants in a British City: A Class Analysis* (1979). As an indication of his influence, Jenkins (2005: 202) claims that Rex “effectively founded the Sociology departments at Aston, Durham and Warwick” and “was director of SSRC [ESRC] Research Unit on Ethnic Relations” as well as one of the creators of the *New Left Review*.



race-relations may be said to exist when the practices of ascriptive allocation of roles and rights referred to are justified in terms of some kind of deterministic theory, whether that theory be of a scientific, religious, cultural, historical, ideological or sociological kind (Rex, 1983: 159-60).

For Rex, race-relations ought to begin with an examination of “structured conditions interacted with actors’ definitions in such a way as to produce a racially structured social reality” (Solomos and Back, 1996: 6). In his empirical research on Sparkbrook (Rex and Moore, 1967) and Handsworth (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979) in Birmingham, Rex pursued this by investigating (i) the extent to which minorities had become incorporated into welfare state institutions, had access to housing, education and employment, and (ii) the impact of racial inequality upon “the development of a ‘racialised’ consciousness amongst both white and black working class” (Solomos, 1993: 20).

Although Rex was explicitly Weberian in his outlook<sup>13</sup>, stressing the importance of status and party along with class, his conclusions from research in Birmingham draw upon a more Marxian style of class analysis in pointing to a ‘truce’ between the bourgeoisie and the white proletariat, furnished by the concessions gained through working class movements such as trade unions and the Labour party. The minority ethnic groups of mainly Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis (or Asians), and ‘West-Indians’, however, according to Rex and Tomlinson (1979), had fallen outside of these negotiations and remained subject to discrimination in all the areas that their white working class counterparts had made gains.<sup>14</sup> This understanding would later be echoed in Paul Gilroy’s (1982: 305-6) assertion that “the institutions of the white working class have failed to represent the interests of black workers”, something

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<sup>13</sup> In *Race & Ethnicity* (1986: 11-12) Rex makes this quite clear when he argues that, “for Weber there are many possible markets and a multiplicity of class situations. A class is simply a number of individuals who share any market situation. Marx, of course, confined the term class specifically to situations arising in the labour market. He was also much more pessimistic than Weber about this market situation and the class conflict to which it gives rise being peacefully resolved. *My own view is that while class relations do not arise in the labour market as Marx suggests, the markets on which they rest are inherently unstable and market bargaining frequently gives way to more drastic forms of conflict*” (emphasis added). According to Rex, these forms of conflict have adverse effects for minorities because they fare consistently badly in the markets for jobs, housing and education, and/or they can be disproportionately excluded from certain markets and opportunities and confined to secondary markets.

<sup>14</sup> For example, housing was a clear example of this differential development of white-working class and non-white working class in Birmingham, with the latter falling into the lower strata of Rex’s definition of housing classes.



already signalled in the formation of immigrant organisations and amalgamations such as the Indian Workers Association (IWA), Pakistani Workers Association (PWA) and the West Indian Standing conference (WISC). Such organisations developed in response to collusions between trade councils, unions and factory managers or operators, including colour bars (such as that introduced in Bristol by the Transport and General Workers Unions (TGWU)) and the refusal to allow Asian women working in the Red Star mill in Leicester to register with the union (see Heineman, 1972 and Shukra, 1998).<sup>15</sup> What Rex and Tomlinson (1979) were keen to point to, however, was the emergence amongst West Indian and Asian communities of a type of 'underclass' which, for the former, would lead to "a withdrawal from competition" and, for the latter, would result in "a concentration on capital accumulation and social mobility" (Solomos, 1993: 20-1). Thus, they argued that

...the minorities were systematically at a disadvantage compared with their white peers and that, instead of identifying with working class culture, community and politics, they formed their own organisations and became effectively a separate, underprivileged class (quoted in Solomos, *ibid.*).

What remained integral to this tradition of race-relations was of course that 'West Indian' and 'Asian' were the preferred terms to describe minority ethnic groups in Britain, and thus there were few concerted attempts to incorporate religion into these perspectives, "either as an important component for self description or as a vehicle for the expression and mobilisation of collective minority interests" (Lewis, 1994: 3). This is in spite of the activities of post-immigrant organisations and amalgamations such as the West Indian Standing Conference (WISC), Indian Workers Association (IWA), and Pakistani Workers Association (PWA), which simultaneously mobilised against Trade Union and employment discrimination whilst seeking sponsorship and funding for churches, temples and mosques (Meer, 2001; Hiro, 1991; Heinemen, 1974).

#### 4. 'Race' and racialization

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<sup>15</sup> What the development of all of these organisations should also point to is the continuing significance of colonial history in Britain, since many of the leaders and organisers used their experience of organising against British colonialism as a basis from which to militate against racism in Britain – particularly when there was evidence of state racism i.e. discriminatory immigration legislation.



The absence of such a nuanced analysis was joined, at the time, by the charge from theorists of ‘racialization’ that race-relations thinking failed to engage with any sustained analysis of questions of power, and was consequently ‘atheoretical’ and ‘ahistorical’. This was the view of Zubaida (1972: 141) who maintained that race-relations research “concerned with ‘attitudes’, ‘prejudice’ and ‘discrimination’ [is] remarkably uninformative”. While Rex’s work certainly eschewed a narrow focus by pointing to the importance of social and economic marginalisation, his detractors argued that he failed to integrate these sociological concerns into “wider conceptual debates about the theory of racism or into the analysis of processes of racialization in contemporary Britain” (Solomos, 1993: 22). At the same time it is worth noting that Rex displayed an interest in the continuing relevance of colonial relations and their articulations within Britain. One of his key texts, after all, is entitled *Race, Colonialism and the City* (1973), and in making a moderate defence, Richard Jenkins (2005: 202) has argued that “for John Rex, theory is not a self-referential intellectual domain – in other words, it is not mainly about theorists and what they say – but, rather, it is a conceptual lens through which to observe the realities of human existence in groups.”

Nevertheless, an early and incrementally systematic attempt to provide a theoretical rebuttal to the race-relations problematic (adopted, in their different ways, by Banton and Rex) can be found in the work of Robert Miles (1982; 1984; 1986; 1988; 1989; 1993).<sup>16</sup> Miles argued that migrants to the UK did not enter a neutral political context but, rather, a “wider ideological context” that was shaped in part by the need to justify and rationalise three centuries of colonial exploitation. He then critiqued the study of minorities through an analytic category of ‘race’ – placing the term within inverted commas since it is “a belief” and not a reality

I recognise that people do conceive of themselves and others as belonging to ‘races’ and do describe certain sorts of situations as being ‘race-relations’, but I am also arguing that these categories of everyday life cannot, automatically be taken up and employed analytically in an inquiry which aspires to objective or scientific status...

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<sup>16</sup> Robert Miles: *Racism and Migrant Labour* (1982); “The riots of 1958: notes on the ideological construction of ‘race-relations’ as a political issue in Britain” (1984); “Labour Migration, Capital Accumulation in Western Europe Since 1945” (1986); “Racism, Marxism and British Politics” (1988); *Racism* (1989); *After ‘Race-relations’* (1993).

there is no scientific basis for categorising *Homo sapiens* into discrete races (Miles, 1982: 42).<sup>17</sup>

What we should actually be studying, according to Miles (1989: 75), is how “material inequalities” and “signifying processes” interact to racialize groups as ‘races’ in “those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the significance of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities”. In turn, this process of ‘racialization’ would also help sustain structures of class inequality and the exploitation of migrant workers. These two issues are interrelated for Miles since there’s a contradiction between

...on the one hand the need of the capitalist world economy for the mobility of human beings, and on the other, the drawing of territorial boundaries and the construction of citizenship as a legal category which sets boundaries for human mobility (Miles, 1988: 438).

In addition, he argued that talk of ‘race’ served to fragment the broader struggles of the working class, to the extent that organisations which mobilised around an experience of ‘race’ and adopted a ‘race-consciousness’ succeeded in creating obstacles to combating processes of racialization. What they should instead be organising around, argued Miles, was a class-based formula that could account for the ‘racialization’ process in the first instance.

Despite the insights offered in his account of ‘racialization’, the uncompromising materialist basis makes it problematic to adopt conceptually in the form Miles intended. However, later in the chapter it will be argued that scope exists for some application of Miles ideas in the analysis of Muslims in Britain with respect to the operation of ‘Islamophobia’ or anti-Muslim racism.

## 5. Race and political blackness

One of the more serious charges levelled against Miles and Marxian perspectives, however, was that not only did it encourage a class reductionism that served to subsume all

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<sup>17</sup> Huxley and Haddon’s (1935: 220) argument that “the word *race* should be banished, and the descriptive noncommittal term *ethnic group* should be substituted”, is probably the earliest sociological argument against the use of ‘race’ as a normative concept.



other social relations, ultimately limiting the scope of theory, but that it disengaged or silenced racial subjects. As Paul Gilroy (1987: 23) argued

This perspective presents Marxism as a privileged science allowing unique access to fundamental historical issues which are denied to analysts writing from other perspectives. Dogmatism is particularly evident in Miles' discussion of class relations inside the black communities. The effects of popular and institutional racisms in drawing together various black groups with different histories is unexplored. The idea that these relationships might create a new definition of black out of various different experiences of racial subordination is not entertained.

Gilroy's objection had, however, already been articulated in his earlier collaborative work with the Race and Politics Group at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and racism in 70s Britain* (1982). The concern here, echoed in Gilroy's comment above, was that the idea of race should not only be viewed as something that is used to regulate and racialize ethnic minorities, but that "the meaning of race as a social construction is contested and fought over" (Solomos and Back, 1996: 10). Thus CCCS authors agreed with Zubaida and Miles' critique of Banton and Rex's formulation of race-relations. They also agreed with Miles that race, as an analytical category, was socially constructed, and that processes of racialization which permeated mainstream society were integral to the function of the modern state, particularly during times of 'crisis' (CCCS, 1982: 277-8; cf Hall et al 1978). However, they deviated significantly from Miles in pointing to the way in which collective identities spoken through race, community and locality might become powerful means to co-ordinate action and create solidarity. This was particularly the case, according to the CCCS (1982: 277), where the 'politics of race' had been successful in forging communities of resistance in the absence of white working class solidarity

[T]he British left has been reluctant to approach the Pandora's box of racial politics. They have remained largely unaffected by over sixty years of black critical dialogue... The simplistic reduction of race to class, which has guided their practice has been thrown into confusion by intense and visible *black* struggles...

The key shift here involves an objection to viewing 'black' communities as passive objects of study in favour of viewing them as active partners in the creation of black political subjectivities. According to Solomos (1993: 30), "a multiplicity of political identities" could from here fall into "an inclusive notion of black identity", whilst allowing "heterogeneity of national and cultural origins within this constituency". These could then resist racialization



processes through co-ordinated action - not least through anti-racist struggles. So the notion of a 'black' identity was taken to incorporate minorities of both south Asian and African Caribbean origin, specifically in contesting racism as something based upon colour prejudice. Thus a dominant strand of anti-racism emerged and sought to organise minority ethnic populations through a politicised – but racialized – colour based ethnicity.

- **The rationale being that the terms of protest against discrimination both refuse and accept the group identities upon which discrimination is based, and that demands for inclusion necessarily invoke and repudiate the differences that have been denied inclusion in the first place.**

This is the basis of an inclusive blackness that is premised upon the desire to reclaim previously demeaned identities and instil a sense 'group' pride.

## **6. Group-pride, self-definition and ethnicity**

Positioned somewhere between Miles' coupling of race and class, and inclusive blackness envisioned by the CCCS (1982) on the one hand, and the emergence of the new ethnicities problematic (discussed below) on the other, Tariq Modood (1988; 1989; 1990; 1992)<sup>18</sup> pointed to the contradictory assumptions informing race-based coalitions by arguing that

we are being asked to understand white attitudes, including what is referred to as common-sense or folk racism, in terms of white culture, ideology and material conditions, but without any reference to the groups of people about whom the attitudes and policies are being made. [...] Minority groups become shadows, for by becoming all race and no ethnicity, their very existence as a group depends upon white people perceiving them (Modood, 1992: 50).

There are two interrelated arguments informing Modood's comment. The first involves making a distinction between what he understands as one's 'mode of being' and 'mode of oppression', and the second seeks to attend to the silenced and/or coerced partners within this black perspectivism, specifically through an understanding of ethnicity and religion

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<sup>18</sup> Tariq Modood: (1988) *'Black', racial equality and Asian identity* (1989); *Religious anger and minority rights* (1990); *British Asians and the Salman Rushdie affair*; (1992) *Not Easy Being British: culture, colour and citizenship*; (1994) *Changing Ethnic Identities* (with others); (1997) *Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities: Diversity & Disadvantage* (with others) (1997); *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity and Muslims in Britain* (2005).



[W]hat is needed is a sociology that is able to connect a group's internal structure, values and understanding of itself, commonly understood as ethnicity, with how that group is categorised and treated as a subordinate race within wider society. The elements, ethnicity and race [...] a group's mode of being and the mode of oppression it suffers, are familiar elements to the sociologists who provide the current frameworks for anti-racist policies, yet they are unable fruitfully to relate the two and thereby assume that ethnicity is of lesser importance (ibid. 48).

This, of course, requires some understanding of what ethnicity actually consists of and Modood's idea shares something with a tradition in which ethnicity is given its most recognisable and modern formulation in the work of Fredrick Barth (1969). Barth's argument revolved around two key points. The first, in an explicit critique of anthropological traditions emphasising cultural content, is that it is most valid to categorise groups according to their own self-identification. The *subjective* dimension of recognition – an internal self-awareness – is therefore more important than the *objective* definition of the group designated by an external party. Second, and in shifting the emphasis away from the possible characteristics of a group, i.e. taking us away from definitions of groups as heralding displays of particular traits or compromising particular behaviours in the classical anthropological sense, Barth (1969: 10-11) argued that we should focus upon the 'boundaries' between groups as a site of identity maintenance. This does not mean, however, that we should think of ethnicity in terms of Banton's 'peripheral contact' or 'plural' race-relations orders, or in a way which suggests "a world of separate people's, each with their culture and each organised in a society which can legitimately be isolated for description as an island to itself". We should instead seek to understand how

...ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained *despite* changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories. [...] The features which are taken into account are not the sum of the objective differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant (ibid. 10, 14).

Where Modood departs from Barth is in prioritising group pride through the projection of positive images and demands for respect, as a way of challenging negative and racist assumptions, which means that *the demand for inclusion necessarily invokes and repudiates the differences that have been denied inclusion in the first place*. Key to this 'ethnic

assertiveness', however, is the recognition of a groups' mode of being rather than a protracted mode of oppression i.e. ethnic groups should not be silenced or coerced into abandoning what is most important to them by succumbing to a category, in this case political blackness, in the name of anti-racism (discussed below).

What was being advocated here, therefore, was the space for ethnic minorities to draw upon internal resources to resist the external constraints of racial discrimination in creative, and potentially contradictory, ways. The methodological implications of listening to these internal voices is not only relevant to ethnographic work, however, but can be adopted in large-scale survey design. For example, in the ten-yearly Policy Studies Institute survey into the conditions of ethnic minorities in Britain (Brown, 1984; Smith, 1977; Daniel, 1968), Modood et al (1997: 291-338) investigated the question: "how do ethnic minority people think of themselves?" Recognising the situational and contextual nature of the question, they worked on the understanding that expressions of ethnicity entail "not what people do but what people say or believe about themselves". Thus self-description is central to ethnicity, which includes expressions of what might be called an "associational or communal identity", as well as cultural practices. Contrasting this with a designated ethnicity according to country of origin or heritage, they found that while people with African-Caribbean ethnicities maintained that skin colour was the most important factor in terms of their self description, for people with South Asian ethnicities it was religion that proved most important. Although they looked at various dimensions of culture and ethnicity such as marriage, language, dress – all of which "command considerable allegiance" – they concluded that religion "is central in the self definition of the majority of South Asian people". Thus when they asked South Asian respondents "Do you ever think of yourself as being black?" only about a fifth of over 1500 respondents gave an affirmative answer.

## **7. New ethnicities**

In their opposing ways, both the CCCS' conception of an inclusive, vehicular, 'black' identity, and Modood's rebuttal in favour of a differentiated ethnic identity that recognises



peoples 'mode of being', feed into the emergence of the 'new ethnicities' problematic. This sought to engage the shifting complexities of ethnic identities, specifically their processes of formation and change, and was given an authoritative voice in the work of Stuart Hall (1988; 1991). According to Cohen (2000: 5), the idea of new ethnicities seeks to capture the way in which "identities had broken free of their anchorage in singular histories of race and nation", not least in the way that a 'black' identity was meant to reference a common experience of racism and marginalisation. At this earlier stage, "ethnicity was the enemy" (Hall, 1991: 55) because it was conceived in the form of a culturally constructed sense of Englishness that was problematic because "a particularly closed, exclusive, and regressive form of English national identity is one of the core characteristics of British racism today" (Hall, 1996 [1988]: 168). An outcome, however, was the tendency to homogenise differences at the expense of more sociologically honest attempts to conceptualise the social relations of minority Britons

'The Black Experience,' as a singular and unifying framework based on the building up of identity across ethnic and cultural difference between the different communities, became 'hegemonic' over other ethnic/racial identities - though the latter did not, of course, disappear (Hall, 1991 [1988]: 164).<sup>19</sup>

With the 'end of innocence' surrounding the notion of an essential black subject, counterpoised as a positive identity against social relations marked by racism, "the politics of representation around the black subject shifts" enough for us to "begin to see a renewed contestation over the meaning of the term 'ethnicity' itself (ibid)."

Ethnicity, however, emerges in a different incarnation here than was earlier surveyed in the Barthian sense or that of Modood. The ethnicities in Hall's concept emerge in "re-inscribing ethnicity outside of the discourses of the sociology of race and ethnic relations and the rhetoric of nationalism" (Solomos and Back, 1993: 137). This is because new ethnicities are individualistic, choice based and 'consumed' in an interaction of the local and the global that displace the "centred" discourses "of the West, putting in question its universalist character and its transcendental claims to speak for everyone, while being itself everywhere and nowhere" (Hall, 1996 [1988]: 169). In many ways the new ethnicities project has been

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<sup>19</sup> This contrasts with the more groupist and communitarian conceptions of Du Bois and rehearses the tensions drawn out in chapter one (sec 1.7.).

highly influential in seeking to heal rifts and propel ways forward from theoretical standpoints that might once have seemed irreconcilable. At the same time, it successfully captures a movement that was already underway, specifically in resisting the master-builder attempts to conceptualise minority identity with imposed political objectives in mind.<sup>20</sup>

Hall is not, however, without his critics. Adrian Favell (2001: 47), for example, has lamented his “inability” to account for both what it is about Britain that has encouraged it to become multicultural and how to measure the presence of racism in society; how it has declined and where it still needs to be eradicated. He argues that this is because Hall and the tradition of Black British Cultural Studies from which he emerges

...needs constantly to uncover new forms of racism and discrimination [which] has seen it continually shift from diagnosing more obvious forms to revealing less open ones, such as ‘cultural’ or ‘institutional’ racism. By definition, then, it can offer no measure of the absolute salience of racism in explaining any given pattern of equality, because as soon as it is not visible, a new hidden form is discovered.

Favell’s two concerns might at the same time be understood as follows. Firstly, and as is indicated in his own comparative work between Britain and France (Favell, 1998), he seeks to tie down a broader philosophy of integration which he thinks can subsume Hall’s project. That is that he awards an ontological primacy to the politics of the state as understood within particular philosophies and political traditions, as opposed to the politics of community action or aesthetic struggle in contesting accepted narratives or discourses of identity and nationality. This is because the latter “inevitably portrays ethnic relations in terms of their successful *resistance* to a dominant form of British nationhood” (ibid).

Favell’s position is tenable while he posits the need to observe how “mainstream culture” has revised its account of nationhood to include multicultural conceptions of Britain. What it ignores, however, is that the tradition he laments for failing to do this has, since the late 1970s, given rise to prominent writers who have directly stressed this need. Dick Hebdige (1979), for example, draws our attention to a “phantom history of post-war race-relations” evidenced in youth cultural formations informing British popular music “from the Beatles to the Police”. Paul Gilroy (1987) meanwhile, one of Stuart Hall’s intellectual heirs, has

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<sup>20</sup> As is discussed shortly, the Rushdie affair provided an important catalyst for this.



famously argued that “it is impossible to theorise ‘black’ culture in Britain without developing a new perspective on British culture as a whole”. This is consolidated in Hall’s (1996 [1988]: 170) own thesis that “fifteen years ago we didn’t care, or at least I didn’t care, whether there was any black in the Union Jack. Now not only do we care, *we must*.” The ‘new ethnicities’ project is then irrevocably part of a re-negotiation of accounts of nationhood, and this conjunction can be witnessed in the report by the Commission on Multi-Ethnic Britain (CMEB) (of which Hall was a member) which attempted to “re-think the national story” (2000: 14).

Favell’s second position however, does not accord with the lived experiences of minorities in Britain. The theoretical need “constantly to uncover new forms of racism and discrimination” might just as easily be based upon the empirical reality of ‘constantly experiencing newer forms of racism and discrimination’. This is returned to and discussed at length below, but suffice to say that neither ‘institutional’ nor ‘cultural racism’ are a figment of the imagination: the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence (MacPherson, 1999), the testimonies informing the Runnymede Trust’s (1997) report on ‘Islamophobia’, and the findings of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (2002) bear witness to this (discussed further below in sec. 9-9.1 and in chp. 4 sec 3).

## Part B: Problematics in practice

### 8. The Rushdie Affair

It still remains unclear, however, where these accounts stand in relation to Muslims. In trying to answer these questions and bringing together the different problematics we have discussed, the episode known as the Rushdie Affair provides an instructive example that exercises what can at times appear to be an abstract discussion. Although the literature surrounding this topic is very broad,<sup>21</sup> the following discussion consciously limits itself to two interrelated debates that took place in Britain during and after the episode.

- The first surrounds the disjuncture between the way British Muslims were viewing themselves, and how dominant accounts of minority identity sought to understand them.
- The second considers the emergence of more complex forms of racism and 'racialization' (as cultural racism and Islamophobia) which affect Muslims in Britain.

Soon after its publication in September 1988, Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* faced objections by some Muslims on the grounds that it blurred reality and fiction because it is based in – and draws upon – Islamic scriptural history (Parekh, 2000). Particular offence was taken at sections of the book that portrayed the Muslim Prophet Mohammed as “an unscrupulous, lecherous impostor who hoodwinked his followers...[and] included in the Qur'an certain verses which turned out to be the work of the devil: the satanic verses” (Hiro, 1991: 183); as well as references to Bilal – revered as the first black convert to Islam – as “a big black shit”; and the portrayal of Khadija – the empowered wife of Mohammed – as a callous prostitute. After initial, peaceful appeals to the publisher to include something

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<sup>21</sup> For accounts written at the time see Modood (1989) *Religious anger and minority rights* and (1990) *British Asian Muslims and the Rushdie affair*; Akhtar (1989) *Be Careful With Muhammad!*; Kabbani (1989) *Letter to Christendom*; Parekh (1989) *Between holy text and moral void*; Cottle (1991) *Reporting the Rushdie Affair: A Case Study in the Orchestration of Public Opinion*; Appignanesi and Maitland (1989) *The Rushdie File*. For accounts written with some benefit of hindsight see Ahmed (1997) *Rushdie: Haunted by his unholy Ghosts*; La'Porte (1999) *An Attempt to understand Muslim Reaction to the 'Satanic Verses'*; Parekh (2000) *Rethinking Multiculturalism*.



disclaiming its historical credentials fell on deaf ears, some Muslim organisations petitioned the government to prosecute the author under the Race-Relations Act (1976), Public Order Act (1986) and Incitement to Racial Hatred legislation (Jones, 1990: 416) (chapter five explores this legislation in great detail). Others, such as the British Muslim Action Front (BMAF) and the Bradford Council of Mosques (BMC), sought to mobilise the English common law of blasphemy as a way of precipitating a ban on the book. Both appeals to legislation failed, the former because Muslims – unlike Sikh and Jewish minorities – are not considered to be a racial group, and the latter because legislation on blasphemy does not cover religions other than Christianity. In the meantime Muslim protests became more active and included setting fire to copies of the novel, in an attempt to elicit media coverage, which led to comparisons with Nazi suppression of public debate (cf Weldon, 1989).

It is important to recognise that British protests did not occur in a vacuum, but took place at a time when the international dimension was marked by the intervention of the Ayatollah Khomeini of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who issued a decree in February 1989 calling for the assassination of the author. Although the British protests had started much earlier and independently of this action, and Khomeini's authority to sanction such a decree was highly contested and enormously problematic, the two issues became implicitly entangled because

Khomeini was now seen by most British Muslims simply as the leading Islamic figure on the world stage, upholding the sanctity of the Prophet Mohammed. Soon Khomeini's pictures became a regular feature of the demonstrations which Muslims mounted in British cities and town from Glasgow to Gravesend, culminating in a large procession in London 28 May 1989 (Hiro, 1991: 186-7).

Largely viewed under the umbrella identity of 'Asian', it was Muslims of Bradford who managed to capture the public imagination most often during the episode. As emotive images of bearded men chanting anti-Rushdie slogans occupied the broadcast media, the realisation that anti-racist activist discourse cataloguing Muslims as politically 'black' may have been unhelpful, was slowly emerging. Modood (1992: 272) illustrates this with the example of anti-racist campaigners who counter-protested against the Muslim protestors in Bradford: "‘Fight racism, not Rushdie’: stickers bearing this slogan were worn by many who wanted to

be on the same side as the Muslims. It was well meant but betrayed a poverty of understanding.”

### 8.1. Implications

The Rushdie Affair was a turning point for Muslims in Britain, for not only did it come at a time of increased lobbying and Muslim political involvement, but it also ruptured the dynamics of this political involvement by demanding that ‘Muslim’ be accepted as a legitimate, public, mainstream identity articulation. What the episode successfully highlighted was that, thus far, the ‘race-relations’ problematics of Michael Banton and John Rex, the class based racialization thesis of Robert Miles, and the inclusive blackness of the CCCS, all failed to explain or understand the complexities in expressions of minority identity in Britain. Banton’s thesis, following on from Park, is a prescription for assimilation since it is only in “an integrated order of race-relations” where differences lose their significance that social consensus can be achieved. As the episode highlights, Muslims in Britain did not want to assimilate at the cost of surrendering their religious heritage, and contested their allocated civic status by mobilising for an accommodation of difference by the state. This view is succinctly captured by the comments, made at around the time of the protests, by a female teacher at a Muslim school in Bradford: “we want the girls here to build up the confidence to say to the outside world, ‘this is me...You have to accept me the way I am’. They are ready to integrate on their own terms.”<sup>22</sup>

Although Rex’s account is less prescriptive, he would similarly hold that Muslims should accept the reality of assimilation to a political culture where objections to Rushdie’s text on the grounds of religious offence should not be entertained (Rex, 1996). Their collective sense of grievance would do little to help alleviate the position of Muslims caught – in Rex’s words – in some kind of ‘underclass’, for the presence of a sizable population who are not only religious but who practice their faith publicly, and the further marginalisation of these

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<sup>22</sup> Quoted on *Public Eye* 20 October, 1989 BBC Television cited in Hiro (1991: 193).



communities through the disparity between state recognition of faiths, escapes Rex's account. The racialization thesis presented by Robert Miles, meanwhile, offers no space to understand the cultural dimension of British Muslim protests. In viewing them as the passive victims of racism, it denies their obvious agency in speaking out and mobilising against a perceived assault on sources of group identity. As Samad (1992: 508) argued, "the *Satanic Verses* controversy added a new claim of authentic identity, a Muslim identity, which challenged assumed loyalties". The idea of an inclusive black identity, as a basis from which to mobilise anti-racist struggle, also suffered from conceiving racism in terms of an objection to visible differences such as skin colour, as Modood (1992: 272) argued

The root of the problem is that contemporary anti-racism defines people in terms of their colour; Muslims – suffering all the problems that anti-racists identify – hardly ever think of themselves in terms of their colour. [...] We need concepts of race and racism that can critique socio-cultural environments which devalue people because of the physical differences but also because of the membership of a cultural minority and, critically, where the two overlap and create a *double disadvantage* (my emphasis).

As well as taking us back to the new ethnicities problematic discussed earlier, specifically as it is precipitated by Modood's concern to distinguish between people's 'mode of being' from their 'mode of oppression', the above observation leads us to consider conceptions of racism and – just as importantly – the basis upon which to mobilise against it. This reading finds resonance in Paul Gilroy's (1992: 60-61) influential essay *The End of Anti-Racism*, in which he argues that "there can be no single or homogeneous strategy against racism because racism itself is never homogeneous". This conception eschews the earlier 'innocence' and can certainly inform current concerns about cultural racism and 'Islamophobia'.

## 9. 'New'/cultural racisms

This is important because contemporary racism is less able, according to Barker's (1981) influential account, to justify systematic discrimination such as apartheid and white supremacy, or the explicit derogation of the 'other' in public discourse or conversation. Knowledge of the Holocaust and post-colonialism have scuppered the legitimacy of biological superiority. Minorities are not simply inferior then, but display pathologies that

require corrective solutions. On this understanding, it is only natural that the majority of people in Britain should prefer to live 'with their own kind'. As the discussion of 'Islamic Terrorism' in chapter four demonstrates (sec 4-4.4), this new racism is played out on a more discursive terrain, and its' cultural emphasis gives it a veneer of democratic respectability rather than an irrational unjustness (van Dijk, 1998). It can therefore deny the importance or continuity of racism in Britain by arguing that opposition to minority communities in Britain is not premised upon racism. To help focus a definition, Modood (1997: 155) argues that "cultural racism builds upon biological racism a further discourse which evokes cultural differences from an alleged British or 'civilised' norm to vilify, marginalise or demand cultural assimilation from groups who also suffer from biological racism." Such new and cultural racisms can then be articulated in the guise of incompatibility and/or cultural dysfunction which, during the Rushdie affair, "served to reinforce the view that minorities who did not want to share the dominant political values of British society pose a threat to social stability and cohesion" (Solomos, 1993: 32). Such an understanding was exemplified in the sentiments of the celebrated liberal-feminist author Fay Weldon (1989). In response to Muslim contestations she wrote

Their hearts are in the right place – it's just that they're a bit primitive. They live in this advanced and intelligent society of ours. They insist on their religious right in this multicultural, multi-religious, benighted society, and almost convince us our guilt is so great. Of course they are not right. You cannot, should not, teach a primitive, fear-ridden religion.

### 9.1. Islamophobia: real or imagined?

Defined as "an unfounded hostility towards Islam, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims", Weldon's perception of Muslims in Britain finds a voice in the idea of Islamophobia outlined in the Runnymede Trust report entitled *Islamophobia: a Challenge for us all* (1997: 4). This report offers eight argumentative positions that are conceived as encapsulating current manifestations of Islamophobia

1. Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change.
2. Islam is seen as separate and 'other'. It does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them and does not influence them.
3. Islam is seen as inferior to the West. It is seen as barbaric, irrational, primitive and sexist.



4. Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism and engaged in a 'clash of civilisations'.
5. Islam is seen as a political ideology and is used for political or military advantage.
6. Criticisms made of the West by Islam are rejected out of hand.
7. Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.
8. Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural or normal.

This way of conceiving of 'Islamophobia' has been widely critiqued. One of the most substantive criticisms is offered by Fred Halliday (1999: 898), who argues that the term used by the Runnymede Trust inadequately accounts for the nature of prejudice experienced by Muslims. He certainly agrees that there is a problem of racism directed at Muslims *as Muslims*, yet he objects to the operationalisation of the term on the grounds that it is misleading

It misses the point about what it is that is being attacked: "Islam" as a religion *was* the enemy in the past: in the crusades or the *reconquista*. It is not the enemy now [...] The attack now is not against *Islam* as a faith but against *Muslims* as a people, the latter grouping together all, especially immigrants, who might be covered by the term. Equally, the 'Islamophobic' attack is against states which may be among the most secular in the world. (ibid. original emphasis)

This is echoed in Reisigl and Wodak's (2001: 6) more general criticism of '-phobias' as neglecting "the active and aggressive part of discrimination" by conceiving of racism as a collection of pathological beliefs. In contrast to the thrust of the Islamophobia concept, Halliday argues that the stereotypical enemy "is not a faith or a culture, but a people" and therefore its use is misleading because it shifts the analysis away from the 'real' targets of prejudice.

Secondly, Halliday argues that the concept of Islamophobia reproduces an essentialist understanding "that there is *one* Islam: that there is something out there against which the phobia can be directed" (1999: 897). This then passes over the heterogeneity of Islam as a cultural system that is a contested field of meaning (Sayyid, 1997), and denies that "what is presented as 'Islam' may well be one, but by no means the only possible interpretation" (Halliday, 1999: 897). Redefining anti-Muslim sentiment like this, he argues, helps expose



the discursive variety of Islam as well as the politically motivated actions of those who claim access to *one true Islam*, including what is at stake in their maintaining such privilege.

Halliday's third criticism combines the previous two difficulties, which he argues lead to "confusing" practical results. This is because "issues of immigration, housing, employment, racial prejudice, anti-immigrant violence are not specifically religious" in either the UK or 'the West' as a whole (Halliday, 1999: 899). Finally, he states that:

[T]he use of the term 'Islamophobia' challenges the possibility of dialogue based on universal principles [since it] inevitably runs the risk of denying the right, or possibility, of criticisms of the practices of those with whom one is having the dialogue. Not only those who, on universal human rights grounds, object to elements in Islamic or other traditions and current rhetoric, but also those who challenge conservative readings from within, can more easily be classed as Islamophobes (ibid.)

Halliday argues that this effect of Islamophobia (curtailing dialogue on the basis that the 'invocation of universal principles violates tradition') is felt at both the national and international levels. However it is abuse occurring "*within Muslim societies themselves*" (original emphasis) which receives the most attention, where "horrendous violations of human rights [...] committed, against Muslims, in the name of religion" are shielded from criticism (Halliday, 1999: 900).

Halliday's critique is more sympathetic and substantial than some polemical and less academic appraisals from different sides of the political spectrum (cf Malik, 2005).<sup>23</sup> There

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<sup>23</sup> For example, Kenan Malik has argued that "the Islamic Human Rights Commission monitored just 344 Islamophobic attacks in the 12 months following 9/11 - most of which were minor incidents like shoving or spitting. That's 344 too many - but it's hardly a climate of uncontrolled hostility towards Muslims. [...] It's not Islamophobia, but the perception that it blights Muslim lives, that creates anger and resentment. That's why it's dangerous to exaggerate the hatred of Muslims. Even more worrying is the way that the threat of Islamophobia is now being used to stifle criticism of Islam". (Transcript of 'Are Muslims Hated?', *30 Minutes*, 8 January 2005, Channel 4). Malik is not alone in holding this view and there are several problematic issues that arise in his analysis that may also be evident in others' (Joppke, 2007; Hansen, 2006). For example, it is easy to complain that Muslims exaggerate Islamophobia without noting that they are no more likely to do so than others who might exaggerate colour-racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, ageism, homophobia or many other forms of discrimination. That is that his claim remains a political rather than a comparatively informed empirical claim. Secondly, and more importantly, Malik limits Islamophobia to violent attacks and ignores its discursive character in prejudicing, stereotyping, direct and indirect discrimination, exclusion from networks and so on, and the many non-physical ways in which discrimination operates. As chapter five demonstrates, these are the very forms of discrimination that Britain's Race Relations architecture has historically developed to prevent and redress. Thirdly, Malik draws upon data gathered prior to the events of 7/7, following which, according to the same source (the Islamic Human Rights Commission) and using the same indices, there were reported to be 200 Islamophobic incidents in the first two weeks after the bombings. These included sixty five incidents of violent physical attacks and criminal



are, however, important problems with it. Firstly, few people would argue that human rights abuse or the inhumane or criminal activities of (people who happen to be) Muslims should be ‘off limits’ to criticism. Part of the difficulty here is that the Runnymede Trust’s own definition of the concept wherein they suggest that Islamophobia is characterised by an “*unfounded* hostility towards Islam” (1997: 4 my emphasis). This clearly entails an interpretative problem of how to establish that such hostility is unfounded<sup>24</sup>. Secondly, as the majority of those British-Muslims who do report experiencing discrimination recount – as testimonies to the 2004 Runnymede follow-up report (CBMI, 2004) bear witness – there is good evidence to suggest that Muslims experience heightened discrimination and abuse when they appear ‘conspicuously Muslim’ than when they do not.

The increase in personal abuse and everyday racism since 9/11 and 7/7 in which the perceived ‘Islamic-ness’ of the victims is the central reason for abuse, regardless of veracity of this presumption (resulting in Sikhs and others with an ‘Arab’ appearance being attacked for ‘looking like bin Laden’), suggests that racial and religious discrimination are more interlinked than Halliday’s thesis allows. For example, the summary report on Islamophobia published by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia shortly after 9/11, indicated a rise in “physical and verbal threats being made, particularly to those visually identifiable Muslims, in particular women wearing the hijab” (Allen and Nielsen, 2002: 16). Despite variations in the number and correlation of physical and verbal threats directed at the Muslim population among the individual nation-states, one overarching feature among the fifteen European Union countries that emerged was the tendency for Muslim women to be attacked because of how the *hijab* signifies Muslim identity (ibid. 35).

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damage, and one fatal stabbing where the victim was accosted by attackers shouting ‘Talibán’ (IHRC press release, 25 July, 2005). These criticisms are compounded by the astonishing finding that between 2001 and 2002, instances of the ‘stop and search’ of ‘Asians’ (categorisations via religion are not kept for instances of ‘stop and search’) increased in London by forty one per cent (Metropolitan Police Authority, 2004: 21), whilst figures for the national picture point to a twenty-five percent increase for the ‘stop and search’ of people self-defining as ‘other’ (Home Office figures for stop and search 2003-4, 2006: 24). The latter can include Muslims of Turkish, Arabic and North-African ethnic origin, amongst others, for while sixty eight per cent of the British Muslim population have a South-Asian background, the remaining minority are comprised of several ‘other’ categorisations.

<sup>24</sup> For example, does hostility to Islam vis-à-vis hostility to *all* religion make one an Islamophobe?



The broader objection to Haliday's account, however, is that institutions such as Church of England denominational schools carry a theological element that, when not equally available to other faiths, elicits charges of discrimination (as discussed in chapter six). When allied, for example, with instances of lesser recognition afforded to Muslim employees to take time off from work for religious festivals, then institutional Islamophobia might become a legitimate charge if grounds for refusal are explicitly based upon an objection to making allowances for Islam in particular (as discussed in chapter five).

At the same time, however, it is important to recognise the insightful aspects of Halliday's thesis on anti-Muslim racism. These become apparent when we couple it to the dynamics of Robert Miles' racialization thesis. If we put to one side the important but, at times, reductive tendencies with respect to the role of migrant labour and capitalist exploitation as a causal factor for the racialization of minorities, and read it as referring to "a process of categorisation, a representational process of defining an Other (usually, but not exclusively) somatically" (Miles, 1989: 79), then we are left with a complementary analytical tool with which to examine contemporary manifestations of anti-Muslim sentiment. An example of how perceptions of Islamophobia can affect Muslims identity is to be found in ethnographic research carried out by Lewis (1994: 178) when during the first Gulf War, he found that a Bradford upper school with a largely Muslim intake was overall "pro-Iraq". This was because, as Werbner (1994) has also found in her research in Manchester, it was evident that most people of Pakistani ethnic origin were sympathetic towards a Muslim country which they perceived to be subject to military aggression. As a "demonization of Islam" took place in local and national press, the youth perceived their *communal* identity to be under threat and therefore 'closed ranks' on the issue with teachers and other non-Muslim students alike. Yet, throughout the same period in the same school, no more than two or three students prayed in an area set aside for prayer. The fact that their grievances did not translate into prayer, but instead heightened their sense of an 'associational' identity, supports the distinction between Muslim and Islamic identities made earlier, namely that whilst the former can be seen as negotiated or not solely prescriptive, the latter are less so.



## 10. Local and global Muslim identities: ethnic, religious or 'Rastafari'?

These dynamics have been examined by Jessica Jacobson (1997, 1998) in her ethnographic research amongst youth with Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds in East London. Her thesis begins by returning to Barth's (1969) argument that ethnic groups should be defined according to the boundaries that actors *subjectively* determine themselves, and not simply according to *objective* classifications based upon ascribed cultural features. She argues that although ethnic and religious cleavages can coincide with one another, they often offer contradictory modes of self definition. Specifically, she points to a greater tendency amongst these youth to emphasise a distinction between religion, culture and ethnicity as facets of identity to argue that

...whereas ethnic boundaries are becoming increasingly permeable and cultural boundaries are (re-) negotiated, the religious boundaries are remaining clear cut and pervasive and thus serve to protect and enhance attachments to Islam (1997: 240).

The explanation she offers for this distinction develops from the way that ethnicity is understood as an attachment to tradition and custom intertwined with cultural practice. Ethnicity here is perceived as non-religious in origin. This allows youth of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent to distinguish between the universalism of religion and limited locality of cultures that migrated from South Asia with an older generation ('disparate loyalties from a disparate place').<sup>25</sup> At the same time, Islam, by and large, is central to their sense of who they are since

...they affirm their belief in its teachings and regard it as something in relation to which they should orient their behaviour in all spheres of life and which therefore demands of them a self-conscious and explicit commitment (1997: 239).

In comparison to their religious identity, Jacobson argues that ethnicity is more peripheral and is not understood as a basis from which to frame their experience of the world – she describes this as the "religion-ethnic culture distinction". She contrasts this with her second definition of "religion-ethnic origin distinction" which involves a perception of identity in terms of

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<sup>25</sup> For those who were brought up in Pakistan and emigrated to Britain as adults, Islam was located in an oral tradition which was ultimately linked to life-cycle rituals. This form of Islam is seeped in rural traditions and inevitably influenced by non-Islamic traditions and arguably has more to do with the Pakistan they left behind than with contemporary Pakistan.

one's attachment to a place, whilst one's religious identity as a Muslim denotes belonging to a global community and commitment to a set of doctrines which transcend national boundaries. This then resurrects the idea of the Muslim ummah or 'community of believers' (cf Sayyid, 2000) and echoes Ali's (1992: 113 cited in Modood *et al* 1994) assertion that "the global appeal of intellectual Islam offers the possibility of a wider world to live in", particularly when enacted in the local community, since youth can use the political and intellectual teachings of Islam to argue and resist parental pressure (based upon an explicitly cultural understanding of Islam) as much as the pressures of racism and exclusion they experience from the majority group. One element in this process, according to Neilsen (1984), is the growing tendency for young people to reject certain customs from overseas that their parents have resurrected in their British localities. A significant factor for this, also noted by Neilsen, is the frequent encounter between Muslims with different ethnic backgrounds and cultural expressions, all of whom hold a valid claim on Islam. This leads to a continuous re-appraisal of what is legitimately Islamic in orientation: it does, as it were, localise the universal nature of Islam.

Yet Jacobson's thesis is less nuanced than this since because she places ethnic identities in binary opposition to religious identities. In doing so she is not alone. Pnina Werbner (2004: 898-9), for example, has distinguished between 'pure' and 'impure' spheres of Pakistani diaspora identity in Britain and has argued that in opposition to increasingly anglicised South Asian cultural negotiations, Muslims in Britain have become problematised through their religious rather than ethnic identities

Whereas Asians are seen to be integrating positively into Britain, contributing a welcome spiciness and novelty to British culture, Muslims are regarded as an alienated, problematic minority: their mosques are depicted as hotbeds of radicalism and anti-western rhetoric... The tension between the two discourses, pure and impure, is necessarily also a source of friction in British Pakistani internal politics between those espousing pragmatic integration and those articulating a more oppositional, exclusionary politics.

It is by no means clear, however, whether it is empirically sustainable to maintain Werbner's assertion that those positioned in the 'pure' (Muslim) sphere are relatively oppositional or exclusionary, for it may also be the case that they espouse an equally inclusive notion of



public or national identity as those in the 'impure' (South Asian) sphere. *In beginning to think about both these issues, we should not mistake the acceptance of minority cultural expressions by a mainstream orthodoxy, as being the sole yard-stick of minority integration, particularly since the cultural specificities of one minority identity might not be commodified or consumed in the same way as another.*<sup>26</sup> What is being argued then is that Werbner risks confusing the two separate issues of (i) how certain forms of difference may or may not lend themselves to synthesis, and (ii) whether certain forms of difference are exclusionary by their own logic *rather than circumstance* (i.e. in the face of majority contempt). This repeats the distinction between multicultural and communitarian conceptions of multiculturalism set out in chapter one, and also negates the potential of Du Bosian synthesis by, like Taylor (chp. 2 sec. 4.4), endorsing an exclusive conception of plural-Britishness and hyphenated identities.

Moreover, both Jacobson and Werbner overemphasise the distinctions between "religion-ethnic culture/origin" and "pure/impure" spheres. This is because, in contradiction to its Barthesian inheritance, recent social anthropology has often overlooked the extent to which religious communal identities can themselves inform ideas of ethnicity. For example, subscribing to a Muslim identification is not necessarily synonymous with religiosity alone, but relates to a transformation of ethnic identity within the context of British society. As Samad's (1997) research amongst young people of Pakistani descent in Bradford highlights, modern interpretations of Islam are accessed in various mediums and, according to Samad, encourages a move away from the oral tradition of Islam that still regulates the lives of the older generation who arrived as immigrants. Complementing this shift in identification is the move away from *briaderi* or regional-based identifications, toward a Muslim identification which glosses over the sectarianism that permeates Islam for the older generation. As a result, identification with Pakistan, or a particular region of Pakistan, becomes less significant and 'Muslim' becomes increasingly prominent

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<sup>26</sup> A good example of this tendency can be found can be found in the section on divided loyalties in chapter four (sec 4.1-4.2).

Through a burgeoning body of literature in English, the youth can also lever open a space on generational issues. In gravitating towards a universal Islam, and glossing over the differences that have been so divisive to the older generation, youth of Pakistani descent in Bradford can be seen to have assimilated since this only happens when – paradoxically – they become more British.

This is evident in the FNS data (Modood et al, 1997) mentioned earlier, but is contested by authors such as Alexander (2000, 2002) for whom current interests in Muslim identity have informed a public discourse that is heightened by both concerns of Islamaphobia and the fear of ‘Islamic radicalism’. Both of which have “...concurred in the positioning of Islam at the centre of political and academic discourse as Public Enemy Number One – Britain’s Most Unwanted, as it were” (Alexander, 2000: 14).

Alexander recounts the splintering of the ‘black’ consensus, most notably in relation to the Rushdie affair, as leading to increasingly “inward looking” and “self-defining difference” which serves to create “seemingly insurmountable boundaries” between various minority ethnic communities in Britain: “Difference may be in, it may be all there is, but it is applied differentially to communities and often obscures more than it reveals” (Alexander, 2002: 553). The splintering of difference along religious lines has, moreover, reproduced perceptions of a ‘culture conflict’, with young men being portrayed as caught between the ethnicity of their parental culture and the universal, self-definition derived from Islam. This religious identification, she argues, is often presented as a defensive reaction to forms of racism and hostility that cannot be rationalised with reference to their parental culture

Like Rastafari before it, Islam thus stands as a psychological barricade behind which Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people (usually young men) can hide their lack of self-esteem and proclaim a fictional strength through the imagination of the *umma* (Alexander, 2002: 553).

The general point being made is that such perspectives lead to a “reification” of essentialized and problematised identities, articulated in an increased concern about “the Muslim underclass”. This serves to locate Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities as the lowest point in a hierarchy of the deprived, and positions “Muslims as the unwilling and resentful heirs of a culture of disadvantage, and as the perpetrators of burgeoning ‘Asian’ criminality” (Alexander, 2002: 15).



## 11. Muslim 'group' identity: essentialism and hybridity

Alexander's thesis is threefold. Firstly she accuses writers like Modood of advancing a reified Muslim subjectivity which, having shifted the debate on minority identity in Britain away from a black/white duality, succeeds in creating a new Muslim/non-Muslim duality. Secondly, she argues that the outcome of focusing explicitly upon a Muslim identity, will serve to dislocate minority ethnic groups from their "shared structural positionings" and common experiences of racism. Finally, she argues that the long term outcome of this trend is likely to involve a move away from the idea of identity as something that is fluid and malleable, to something that is no longer allowed to be 'hybrid' because it is difficult to mobilise around heterogeneity.

Taking each point in turn, and as witnessed in the Barthesian account of ethnicity, the idea of a group intrinsically involves some degree of positioning within and between the sites of 'boundaries'. These are not unproblematic, can be multiple, and may be informed by common experiences of racism; sexuality; socio-economic positions; geographical locality and so forth. In this sense, all groups are socially constructed, and it is clear that people tend to associate with those with whom they perceive to share some affinity. One of the reasons that it is important to recognise Muslim identity as a 'group' identity is that this is how it is understood by Muslims themselves. For the purposes of research, therefore, the category of 'Muslim' becomes no less valid than categories such as 'working class', 'woman', 'black' or 'youth'. As Modood (1994: 9) has argued, it is inconsistent to protest against the use of 'Muslim' as an analytical category simply because it has the same "dialectical tension between specificity and generality" that all group categories are subject to. This is not to 'essentialize' or 'reify' the category of Muslim as Alexander charges, however, since it can be "as internally diverse as 'Christian' or 'Belgian' or 'middle-class', or any other category helpful in ordering our understanding of contemporary Europe; but just as diversity does not lead to the abandonment of social concepts in general, so with that of 'Muslim'"(Modood, 2003: 100).

Alexander's second objection, however, is less valid. As the preceding discussion has highlighted, "shared structural positionings" and "common experiences of racism" are no longer sufficient grounds upon which to examine the experience of Muslims in Britain alone. The discussion of Islamophobia makes this clear. In fact, one of the reasons that Muslim identity should be recognised differently from that of 'Black', 'Asian' or 'Minority group', is that Muslims are subject to discrimination and exclusion as a group, and so the terms of protest against discrimination both refuse and accept the group identities upon which discrimination has been based. This is lucidly captured by Maleiha Malik (2005: 50)

If Muslims see their sense of identity reflected in legal and political institutions, and they see their concerns being taken seriously by these institutions, they are more likely to comply with the obligations of these institutions without feeling coerced. Therefore, in order for Muslims to feel that their concerns are being accurately reflected, it is vital that policy makers and legal and political institutions recognise Muslims as a distinct social group.

This attends to the prospect, set out in chapter one, that institutions and social practices attribute a minority status to some inherent qualities in the minority group, as if those qualities were the *reason* rather than the *rationalization* for not taking their sensibilities into account. As the previous chapter delineated from Du Bois, this would mean that the subject group are more likely to be disenfranchised than alienated so that it is not so much cultural *difference* as *cultural disfranchisement* that would shape their struggle i.e. demands for incorporation necessarily invoke the differences that have denied incorporation in the first place. This does not, however, require us to roll back to an understanding of identity as necessarily hostile to 'hybridity'. Concepts of 'hybridity', and related ideas of 'syncretism', 'creolisation', 'melange', have all been widely deployed in discussions of racial and ethnic identifications (Bhabha, 1994; Gilroy, 1987; Werbner and Modood, 1997). Similarly, the concept of diaspora, although not at first sight necessarily associated with processes of mixing, can also be deployed to the same kind of effect, evoking a context or dynamic which creates an overlapping heterogeneity (Gilroy, 1993; Brah, 1996). In this sense, hybridity is understood as a powerful counter to accounts of primordial, essential or exclusive identities, either in ethnic, national, religious or racial settings, and are seen as subversive and



dislocating of entrenched categories, particularly in post-colonial contexts. Such accounts assume, however, that to talk of an essential identity is necessarily exclusivist and, as empirically demonstrated in the case study of Muslim schools in the chapter six, fails to appreciate the differences between 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak, 1988) as a positive type of collective self-identification, and 'reification' which silences differences (Werbner, 1997: 229). Alexander seems to have difficulty making this distinction, and so is blind to the broader argument that the focus upon 'British-Muslims' represents a recognition of "complex forms of Britishness" emphasised by British Muslims themselves who are "attempting to politically negotiate a place in an all-inclusive nationality" (Modood, 1998: 389). In this way we can hope to "retain a description of social group differentiation, but without fixing or reifying groups" (Young 2000: 89) so that the following statement by Sher Azam – a community leader in Bradford - shouldn't strike us as extraordinary

We call ourselves British Muslims. Whether or not anybody acknowledges us or accepts us, we have decided that this is our country, this is our home and this is where our children and grandchildren have decided to live (quoted in Lebor, 1997: 129).

## 12. Conclusions

So where does this leave our discussion of Muslim-consciousness? Firstly, it suggests that the literal and prescriptive accounts, surveyed at the beginning of this chapter, do not satisfactorily explain the adoption and promotion of Muslim identities per se. That is to say that where the common and defining factor is a reference to Islam, this permits enormous scope to continually imagine and re-imagine what a Muslim identity entails. Does this mean that it is incoherent for Muslim identities to be articulated as simultaneously valid but competing ways of expressing hopes, beliefs and desires? The argument offered here is that expressions of Muslim identity in all their contested variety cannot be dismissed simply because they are subject to the same dialectical tensions - between the general and the particular – as other categories (Modood, 1994). As Sayyid (2000: 40, 48) reminds us

...the formation of all identities is relational and exclusionary. Identities based on faith, gender, class, culture (or whatever) all have this exclusionary and relational logic... sometimes, the critique of essentialism has the effect of turning all social identities into facades... all social identities are heterogeneous since they do not have

an essence that can guarantee their homogeneity...but one should not confuse the existence of social identities as being necessitated by some essence... The idea that unless there is total agreement among Muslims it is impossible to think of a Muslim presence, would suggest that a collective is only possible under conditions of unanimity.

Conceptually, Muslim collectivities can be theorised by the sorts of groupings elaborated in ideas of ethnicity, including Barthian accounts of boundary maintenance. This is important because it begins to explain how subscribing to a Muslim identification is not necessarily synonymous with religiosity alone, but relates to a transformation of ethnic identity within the context of British society. For example, the existence or prevalence of Muslim identity might be assessed by whether there is strong, moderate, weak or no attachment to the sites of boundaries understood as structuring Muslim behaviour. This might include orthodox activities such as collective worship or adherence to ritual, but also behaviour deemed Islamic by those partaking in it but not expressly derived from a spiritually prescriptive one alone. This might include becoming involved in electoral politics or setting out to educate children by running schools. At the same time, it is important to remember that these behavioural norms need not provide the foundations for attitudinal expressions of Muslim group membership or vice versa. This is relevant because, as the FNS data reports, the use of labels and the willingness to associate oneself with groups on a general level can inform patterns of associational identities that equally harbour a “capacity to generate community activism and political campaigns”, and so should not be seen as weak simply because they emerge in a “mixed form” (Modood et al, 1997: 337). All of this means that the subjective criterion is preferred over the objective since, as discussed in relation to the debates and reactions to the Rushdie Affair, expressions of identity remain situational and can become more pronounced at some points and less at others. To understand them requires inquiry into the ways people see themselves and seek to be recognised. However, although this subjective element is crucial, the adoption of Muslim identity is not reducible to an instance of individual choice. For the reasons outlined above, the framing of Muslim identity in contemporary Britain is not free of external pressure, objectification and racialisation. That is to say, cultural racism and Islamophobia seek to degrade and vilify both the civilisational heritage in the abstract, and



the physicality of Muslims as the subject. Thus a Muslim appearance, whether or not the bearer is in fact Muslim, becomes a reviled site of contempt, and a signifier for all things Muslim or Islamic.

This leads to the second broad conclusion, which is that earlier political formulations have been instrumental in recognising and protecting identities that are equally unstable, contested or seemingly dependent upon 'choice', i.e. categorisations of racial and ethnic minorities generally, including Jewish and Sikh identities. This thesis argues that constructed hierarchies of legitimate or illegitimate difference should not be mistaken as a natural order of things. Such normative grammars of involuntary identities are obviously disrupted by the emergence of Muslim identities which seek all the benefits and protections afforded to other minority identities. These identities are neither passive objects of racism nor frozen articulations tied to their country of origin. They have emerged in Britain as an articulation of Muslim-consciousness. What this thesis addresses next is how these forms of Muslim-consciousness relate to cases of Muslim mobilisations for certain forms of civic status, and whether we should talk about the British Muslim experience in terms of the double consciousness discussed in the previous chapter. It is important to recognise that these arguments also contain discursive dimensions that are a central and not a minor feature. To explore what is meant by this, the next chapter examines the representation of Muslims in public and media commentary. This includes a discourse analysis of the salient themes through which this representation is proceeding and how Muslims themselves are responding to it.

## **Chapter Four**

### **‘Seeing oneself through external narratives’ - Muslims in Public and media discourse**

#### **1. Introduction**

As chapter two illustrated through his discussion of the veil and the construction of the self, the manner in which minorities are publicly represented is integral to Du Bois’ account of double consciousness. That external narratives on minority identity impinge upon the sorts of consciousness minorities experience, is a concern captured in his protest that “our worst side has been so shamelessly emphasised that we are denying that we ever had a worst side [so that] in all sorts of ways we are hemmed in” (1903: 127). This is why Du Bois encourages the cultivation of a positive public representation of minorities, so that they might transcend the ‘peculiar sensation’ that they are indeed ‘a problem’. For these reasons public and media discourses can make a relevant contribution to the sorts of civic status that minorities experience. An inquiry, therefore, into these currents might contribute something meaningful to our specific concern with Muslim-consciousness in Britain. With this in mind, the purpose of the present chapter is to explore some of the ways in which Islam and Muslims are negatively portrayed in public and media discourse, and how some British-Muslims have responded by representing themselves through a proliferation of Muslim media sources.

It is worth noting at the outset that Islam and Muslims in Britain have only relatively recently achieved the sort of prominence accepted as a familiar reality today. Adopting a similar timeframe to that spelling out the emergence of Muslim-consciousness in the previous chapter, Poole (2002: 3) describes how in recent years Muslims have moved from “the margins of coverage in the British news media” and from being a “distant object in the consciousness of the majority of the British people” to now forming “an uncomfortable familiarity.” She continues:



“Islam is suddenly ‘recognizable’ but it is the form in which Islam is known that is of concern here”. Indeed, and whilst the manner in which Islam might be recognised is various for there are multiple ways in which it can be conceived (chp. 3 sec 2-2.2.), an inquiry into salient negative discourses, so that we can examine how and in what ways the ‘Muslim problem’ rests or departs from what we know of Muslim minorities in Britain, will explore the following views: (i) that Muslims curtail freedom of speech; (ii) are self-segregating; and (iii) are ultimately disloyal and, of course, potentially violent vis-à-vis terrorism. In the same way that the case-studies of Muslim-consciousness and discrimination legislation in chapter five and mobilisations for Muslim schools in chapter six include some comparison with other minorities, a similar attempt will be made here through reference to Jewish minorities at an earlier period of their settlement in Britain. The reasons for this are more clearly set out in the discussion when comparisons are made, but include the fact that Jewish groups, like Muslims after them, have formed both racial *and* religious minorities.

## **2. Muslims and Free Speech**

The previous chapter considered the issue of cultural racism and Islamophobia (sec. 9-9.1), and which are returned to in chapter five, to examine the ways in which anti-Muslim discrimination are or are not recognised within current anti-discrimination formulae. As discussed at length in the next chapter (chp. 5 sec. 3), one example touches upon the overlapping issues of Racial Equality and religious discrimination to be found in proposed Incitement to Religious Hatred legislation. Indeed, the next chapter details that when the creation of this offence was first proposed in a 2001 Parliamentary Bill, it became subject to intense public and media debate, a factor which both advocates and opponents have cited as critical to the eventual introduction of much weaker legislation by Parliament (see comments by Cohen in chp. 5 sec. 3; comments by Toynbee in Meer, 2007b, and also Modood, 2006 and Sacranie, 2006). One of the most striking features of this public and media commentary was the dissonance between Muslim

groups who argued that the recourse to law was necessary at a time of increased objectification, intimidation and incitement to hatred, and the mainstream media which presented it as an example of Muslim incompatibility vis-à-vis British culture and tradition (in ways reminiscent of the discourses evidenced during the Rushdie Affair see chp. 3 sec. 8).

Contrary to viewing it as an attempt to incorporate an unimpaired Muslim-consciousness into the public sphere, it was argued that Muslims were seeking to put their beliefs beyond scrutiny, something premised upon a hermeneutic separation of the involuntary and voluntary identities of race and religion. A second charge revolved around the extent to which the government was thought to be compromising hard won freedoms by cynically placating ‘angry Muslims’ who were dissatisfied with foreign policy. A third and dominant discourse characterised the proposed legislation as something sought by extremists in their broader project of Islamising Britain. Indeed, this last theme drew upon *and* overlapped with others surrounding ‘Muslim and Islamic Terrorism’ in the manner unpacked in the following sections.

### *2.1. ‘Race’ and religion are different phenomena*

One of the key objections to the proposed incitement to religious hatred legislation was captured in the actor and comedian Rowan Atkinson’s signature statement made throughout various incarnations of the bill: “To criticise a person for their race is manifestly irrational and ridiculous but to criticise their religion, that is a right” (quoted in *The Liverpool Daily Post*, 7 December 2004). This is because “[t]here is an obvious difference between the behaviour of racist agitators...and the activities of satirists and writers who may choose to make comedy or criticism of religious belief, practices or leaders, just as they do with politics. It is one of the reasons why we have free speech” (quoted in *The Sunday Times*, 4 December, 2004). Whilst there is little here that might have been prohibited through the proposed instruments, the operating assumption is that satire and critique – as opposed to incitement to hatred – would be quelled, whilst the possibility that the very same ‘racist agitators’ might use religion, as previously demonstrated



(chp. 5 sec 2.3-3), to incite hatred appears to have entirely escaped Atkinson's distinction. A cruder form of this logic was invoked by the commentator and liberal activist Joan Smith, who, writing in the centrist-libertarian *Independent* newspaper, argued: "Race is a biological fact, and it is wrong to hate people because they belong to a particular ethnic group; religion is a set of ideas, voluntarily adopted, which may or may not be offensive to members of other faiths" (*Independent*, 8 December, 2004). The conflation of the concept of ethnicity with that of race is particularly interesting in this quotation and is employed in a way which denies that either concept is socially constructed or in any way complex. Indeed, the uncritical recitation of racial biology in protestations that race and ethnicity are somehow concrete and inescapable facts which represent truly 'involuntary' identities, whilst religion is entirely socially constructed and voluntary, has been a common tendency amongst a range of commentators on the subject. For example, it is a technique employed by the former Conservative MP and political sketch writer, Matthew Parris who, in the liberal-conservative paper, *The Times*, argued that "...with race relations, the intention is to protect individuals, not ideas, from attack. The difficulty here is that (broadly speaking) race defines a human group, rather than an idea, so racial attacks are almost by their very nature hateful towards individuals and therefore easily criminalised. Religion, however, is essentially an idea, not a group" (*The Times*, 11 December, 2004). The view that this legislation fell outside the Racial Equality paradigm was most trenchantly put by Polly Toynbee, of the liberal-left *Guardian*, who argued that she reserved the 'right' to affront religious minorities on the basis of their faith

[I]t is now illegal to describe an ethnic group as feeble-minded. But under this law I couldn't call Christian believers similarly intellectually challenged without risk of prosecution. *This crystallises the difference between racial and religious abuse. Race is something people cannot choose and it defines nothing about them as people. But beliefs are what people choose to identify with [...]* The two cannot be blurred into one - which is why the word Islamophobia is a nonsense (emphasis added) (10 June, 2005, *The Guardian*).

There are several implications to Toynbee's position that return us to the discussion of 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' identities set out in chapter three (sec. 2.3) and five (sec. 2.2), and

which can be elucidated by considering the following analogy. Suppose that a Jewish person could 'pass' for being non-Jewish. Where they might be subject to discrimination on the grounds of their Jewishness they should, according to Toynbee's logic, use this option so that they are (a) less *offensive* to others and (b) less *offended* by others. In other words, Toynbee's logic dictates that those subject to discrimination or hostility should choose, where possible, to change their identity in order to avoid discrimination. This, of course, invites the tyranny of the majority and contravenes every liberal conception of autonomy, freedom of conscience and expression, considered in chapter six (sec 7.1-8), or which Toynbee herself seeks to uphold. Yet, such views are openly displayed in her discussion of Muslims, views that include her unrepentant statement that: "I am an Islamophobe and proud of it" (*Independent*. 23 October, 1997).

## 2.2. Designed to placate angry labour Muslims

The discursive exclusion of Muslims from the Racial Equality paradigm ran parallel to accusations that the government was only considering the legislation because it was "[t]errified of losing the Muslim vote as a result of the Iraq war" (McKinstry, *The Express*, 22 September, 2005). For example, Michael Burleigh of the right-wing *Daily Telegraph* characterised it as

...a cynical attempt to claw back Muslim support for New Labour that has been squandered through the war in Iraq. [...] Those claiming to speak for the Muslim community have played to the traditional Left-wing imagination by conjuring up the myth of 'far-Right extremism'. In reality, evidence for 'Islamophobia' - as distinct from a justified fear of radical Islamist terrorism or a desire to protect our freedoms, institutions and values from those who hold them in contempt - is anecdotal and slight (9 December, 2004).

The claim that the Labour government were only pursuing the legislation in order to protect votes may well have some truth in it although, as chapter five details, the offence was first proposed in the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Bill 2001, before the Iraq War. Whatever the underlying factors motivating the government, an acknowledgement of the political context in which the offence was initially introduced should not undermine the original argument in favour, nor the continuing requirement and legitimacy of, such legislation. To be sure, and as chapter five



clearly demonstrates, the remaining discrepancy in the level of protection and scope for redress continues to inform Muslim complaints of inequality (chp. 5 sec. 6). Nevertheless, and in agreement with Toynbee, Burleigh dismisses Islamophobia as a myth and rationalizes hostility to Muslims on the grounds of self-preservation. He is supported in this view by Simon Heffer of the *Daily Mail*

The result of this politically correct desire to pander to one small section of society will be that everyone will have their freedoms constrained. Moreover-you can be sure that the law would not lead to the appearance of Muslim extremists in court for attacking the majority religion of Christianity. I cannot see why we should make their religion immune from our intellectual or humorous assault (11 December, 2004).

Heffer's friend (we) / enemy (they) distinction operates on the understanding that Muslims do not form part of the greater British constituency that shares with "the majority religion of Christianity" a stake in the national space. These claims and rhetorical techniques perfectly illustrate the way in which Du Bois characterised the operation of the veil, in that the majority do not see anything other than their own mastery – defined in this case as being a religious majority – when they look upon Muslim minorities.

### *2.3. Extremists and freedom of speech*

The complaint that "extremists and fundamentalists will be the ones to use this law, rather than mainstream groups" was also made by senior barrister Neil Addison. For example, he claimed, "if a small Muslim group decides to bring a case against a Christian church in England, then everyone who reads about the case will blame all Muslims for it. This kind of action would cause resentment, and divisiveness" (quoted in the *Lancashire Evening Post*, 22 November, 2004). On one level this was a very reasonable concern for the welfare of an already resented minority. On another it contributed to the view that

[T]his new legislation is nothing to do with good race relations. It is solely based on the Government's eagerness to pander to Muslim fundamentalism, whose aggressive mentality treats even the mildest criticism as an outrage... No other religious group is demanding any change except the Muslims (McKinstry, *ibid*).

McKinstry's accusation that the proposed legislation constituted nothing less than a pandering to a Muslim aggressive mentality, is a characterisation which was stretched further by Toby Young of the *Mail on Sunday*, who, invoking the Rushdie Affair, rationalised the present issue in terms of a continuing thread of 'fundamentalism', since: "[T]hey've been lobbying for a change in the law to make it illegal to attack the Islamic religion ever since Salmon Rushdie published *The Satanic Verses* in 1988" (12 December, 2004). These words almost exactly parallel those spoken by the once staunch anti-racist, Dianne Abbot, who, during a Parliamentary debate stated

The reason why we are troubled is that we remember when the clamour first arose for the protection of Islam as a religion, in the wake of publication of 'The Satanic Verses' when there were marches, book-burnings and demands for protection. The demand then was for a blasphemy law for Islam, and the demand now is for a blasphemy law for Islam (Hansard 21 June 2005, column 681).

In not a dissimilar way, for Peter Hitchens, the proposed legislation threw into relief broader civilisational concerns, which conflated issues of difference with those of conquest. For, while "the idea of Islamic Britain may seem highly unlikely now...we should remember that Muslim armies came within an inch of taking Vienna in 1683 and were only driven from Spain in 1492" (*The Daily Mail*, 2 November, 2003). Such alarm is characteristic of a debate marked by a manifest mis-understanding of the issues, not least the idea that proposed legislation sought to protect a religion from critique. At times, the claims of these various commentators display a complete failure to interrogate the socially contingent aspects of racism and identity. Even more worryingly, much of the common sense argumentation in fact displays a much more malign characteristic in propagating the myth that Muslims have an enormous amount of influence and power to curtail freedom of speech with the broader aim toward the Islamisation of Britain.

### 3. Importation or reference to European discourses

To some extent this also reflects an importation of European discourses vis-à-vis the 'advanced' state of negative relations with Muslims on the Continent. For example, following the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten's* publication of cartoons 'satirising' the Prophet Mohammed,



the ensuing fall-out across Europe was clearly presented in some mainstream quarters of the British press as a European-wide 'clash of civilisations'. In this way Holland, for example, was referred to by one *Sunday Times* commentator as 'the canary in the mine'

Where Holland has gone, Britain and the rest of Europe are following. [...] Holland - with its disproportionately high Muslim population - is the canary in the mine. Its once open society is closing, and Europe is closing slowly behind it. It looks, from Holland, like the twilight of liberalism... not least freedom of expression. All across Europe, debate on Islam is being stopped...and in Britain the government seems intent on pushing through laws that would make truths about Islam and the conduct of its followers impossible to voice (Murray, 26 February, 2006).

Whilst these characterisations were more prevalent in centre-right publications, the view that the cartoons formed part of a broader continental problem was not localised to the centre-right. For example, Bruce Anderson of the *Independent* argued that

The cartoons did not create the tension. They merely highlighted it. They have forced Europe to face a problem which most political elites would rather ignore, although it will be one of the major questions of the next few decades: How are we to achieve peaceful coexistence with Islam? (6 February, 2006).

In more combative terms, the cartoons were described by the *Daily Mail* columnist Richard Littlejohn in a clash of civilisations rhetoric:

...the publication of a couple of cartoons in Denmark has absolutely nothing to do with freedom of speech. This is war. [...] In Holland, it was the murder of a Dutch filmmaker deemed guilty of showing insufficient respect to Islam. In Spain, it was the slaughter of hundreds of commuters in Madrid. In France, it is the routine desecration of Jewish graveyards and synagogues (Littlejohn, 7 February, 2006).

These considerations, it is argued, are more advanced on the continent than they are in the UK because "in Holland and Belgium, liberals have woken up to the fact that Muslims and Islam are not their ally. What will it take before their equivalents do the same here?" (Hitchens, 12 February, 2006, *Mail on Sunday*).

#### 4. 'Islamic Terrorism'

It is arguable that the most incendiary and combative opposition to preventing hate speech directed at Muslims drew upon salient currents that couple Islam and violence through the category of the 'Islamic Terrorism'. This is an analytically unhelpful category, because terms

such as 'terrorism', 'extremism', 'fundamentalism' and 'Islamism' tend to be highly contested and relational - and therefore valid only after careful qualification and contextualisation.<sup>1</sup> However, it is increasingly common to find the portrayal of a seamless association between the two.<sup>2</sup> This is an example of what Jackson (2006) has called a culturally embedded 'hard' discourse because so many other assumptions compound and reinforce it. One of these is that since Muslims and 'Islamic terrorists' are products of a fanatical strain of Islam, the violence that is committed by Muslims "evolves out of something inherent in the religion, rendering any Muslim a potential terrorist" (Pool, 2002: 4). Whilst some scholars go to great lengths to argue that most Muslims consider violence and terrorism to be an egregious violation of their religion (see Haliday, 2003: 107), at the level of public discourse, attempts to de-couple this view are often dismissed as oversensitive. Thus Tony Blair could recently argue that

There is a new and virulent form of ideology associated with a minority of our Muslim community... let us not be foolish, in our desire not to cause offence... it's daft to deny the fact that they justify their extremism by reference to religious belief (8 December, 2006).<sup>3</sup>

One of the arguments that this has given rise to is that 'moderate' Muslims must take the lead in fighting the extremism that underpins this 'Islamic terrorism'. For example, Baran (2005: 84) argues that a central counter-terrorism task is "to find ways of helping moderates win the theological and ideological civil war currently taking place within the Muslim world" (see also Haqqani, 2003). Similarly, when the former Foreign Secretary Margaret Becket asked Muslims

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<sup>1</sup> This point is a convincingly made in Denoeux's (2002) argument that the term 'fundamentalism' is particularly misleading because of the connotations derived from its origins in early twentieth century American Protestantism, and so is not easily applied to Islam and Muslims. Despite the problematic nature of the term it remains the case that "fundamentalism is made flesh by drawing upon examples of 'Islamic Fundamentalism' [with the effect that] Islamic fundamentalism has become a metaphor for fundamentalism in general" (Sayyid, 1997: -7-8). In reality, the dividing line between such categories as 'extremists' and 'moderates' is not only context-specific, but also highly porous, constantly shifting and dependent upon subjective value-judgements (Modood and Ahmed, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> This section demonstrates how this is achieved discursively by taking "an image and set of terms [to] provide a basic model which can be deployed again and again as the organising theme in a cumulative shaping of social perception" (Trew, 1979: 142).

<sup>3</sup> See also his statement that "the security threat that this Islamic extremism poses is the government's primary responsibility". 'Prime Minister warns of continuing global terror threat', 5 March, 2004, available online at: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/output/Page5461.asp>.



in Britain “to stand up to extremists” (quoted in *The Guardian*, 9 November, 2006), or when another government Minister, Patricia Hewitt, stated that Muslims “in positions of responsibility and leadership need to stand up against the propaganda and against the perverted form of extremist Islam that a dangerous minority in the Muslim community wants to impose” (quoted in the *New Statesman*, 25 July, 2005), they were rehearsing the views expressed by a range of other senior ministers including Tony Blair, Ruth Kelly (see chp. 1 sec. 5) and John Reid.<sup>4</sup>

#### *4.1. Divides Loyalties*

Indeed, one of the most striking features of the public discussion surrounding Muslims in Britain since 9/11 is the extent to which it is marked by a concern over dual and divided loyalties and, even more so since 7/7, public perceptions of the threat posed from Muslim disloyalty, a fear that frames and reduces complex choices to binary options. This is affectively illustrated in the following readers’ letters:

Muslim soldiers have expressed their reluctance to fight in Iraq as they may kill fellow Muslims. The old question for these Muslims has become: who is sovereign: Queen (the State) or Mohamed? Unfortunately those who perpetrated the 7/7 bombings clearly gave their answer to that question (Letters, June 10 2006, *The Independent*).

Muslim fundamentalists feel no loyalty to Britain and the values of democratic and peaceful debate, because they adhere to an ideology which does not see any value in Britishness (Letters, *The Times*, 9 June 2006)

Elsewhere in the press, and throughout the discussion of how such problems will endure, British Muslim leadership is accused of appeasing such militant views

If foreign extremists are a major problem so, alas, are a minority of British-born Muslims who place religious fanaticism above any notion of loyalty to their country. In such circumstances one would hope for wise leadership within the Muslim community. Instead, the supposedly “moderate” Sir Iqbal Sacranie pops

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<sup>4</sup> Former Home Secretary John Reid has encouraged Muslim parents to monitor their children for signs of radicalism: “There is no nice way of saying this... these fanatics are looking to groom and brainwash children, including your children, for suicide bombings. Grooming them to kill themselves in order to murder others. Look for the telltale signs now and talk to them before their hatred grows and you risk losing them forever. In protecting our families, we are protecting our community.” See <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/terrorism/story/0,,1876869,00.html>

up to say that the July 7 attacks would not have happened if we had not gone to war in Iraq. What will be the reason given for the next attack; that we are too pro Israeli, or too tough on Iran. This will not do. Those who feel blind loyalty to Islam and none whatever to Britain should go and live in an Islamic country and leave the rest of us in peace (Leader, Daily Express, 3 June 2006).

At first sight it may seem that there is little mileage in searching for a comparator to this problematisation of British Muslim allegiances, in the way some comparisons could be made in the examination of Muslim mobilisations for Muslim schools or anti-discrimination legislation. However, if one moves away from the contemporary specificity and focuses upon processes of racialisation, a possible analogy reveals itself.

This can be found in the way in which British Jews at around the turn of the century were associated with anarchism and Bolshevism.<sup>5</sup> In these terms the analogy turns on the following poles according to which a religious minority is characterised as a potential threat: Jews/Anarchist Bolsheviks; Muslims/Islamic Terrorists. It is worth remembering, for example, that from the 1860s onwards there were a number of Anarchist uprisings and bombings throughout Europe, and London soon became a refuge for some of those involved in these

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<sup>5</sup> Between 1870 and 1914 some 120,000 European Jews migrated to Britain, and by WWI the Jewish population of Britain is estimated to have numbered around 300,000 (Gartnet, 1973: 30; Pollins, 1982: 130). Although this included destitute newcomers fleeing both the Pogroms and economic deprivation in Russia, it was a figure supplemented by established British Jews who, through organisations such as the Jewish Board of Guardians (JBG), Board of Deputies of British Jews, and Jewish Free Schools (JFS), operated as the main provision of welfare to these newcomers. Concentrated in areas of Leeds and the East End of London, these new migrants arrived with very little capital and possessions, and were considered visibly different to their settled British Jewish counterparts who were in some respects politically and socially established (Lipman, 1990: 48). For example, The Board of Deputies of British Jews had become institutionally incorporated as the representative body of Jews in Britain, especially under the leadership of Montefiore between 1835 and 1874 (ibid. 35). The prosperity of the Victorian period allowed established Jewish families to increasingly enter the upper echelons of politics and society, as epitomised, for example, in Rothschild becoming the first Jewish Member of Parliament, and these established families increasingly assumed a leadership in the complex voluntary bodies within the Jewish community (ibid. 17). Simultaneously, there was also evidence of the ability of Jewish leaders to make representations on behalf of Jews outside Britain, exemplified by Montefiore's efforts to protect Jews in Syria and the Ottoman Empire. Where these interests overlapped with British foreign policy interests, such initiatives were successful (ibid. 37). Yet it was the same foreign policy issues that fuelled extensive and violent anti-Semitic episodes, especially during times of crisis. This was commonly presented as the potential threat posed by a settled and ostensibly assimilated Other seeking to subvert British interests, and is epitomised by what become known as the 'Bulgarian Affair'. This concerned Bejmamin Disraeli's support for the established British policy buttressing Turkey against Russia, and the way it was construed as evidence of his Jewish origins and bias (Holmes, 1979: 10-12). It is also exemplified by the manner in which the Boer War was presented as a conflict pursued solely to protect Jewish financial interests in the mining industry, as explored below.



movements. While most anarchists were peaceful a tiny minority resorted to violent attacks such as the bombing of Greenwich Observatory in 1894 - described at the time as an “international terrorist outrage” because anarchist violence was an international phenomenon

In Europe it claimed hundreds of lives, including those of several heads of government, and resulted in anti-terrorism laws. In the siege of Sidney Street in London in 1911, police and troops confronted east European Jewish anarchists. This violent confrontation in the heart of London created a racialised moral panic in which the whole Jewish community was stigmatised. It was claimed that London was ‘seething’ with violent aliens, and the British establishment was said to be “in a state of denial” (Malik, 2 February, 2007).

Long before the “Londonistan” (Phillips, 2006) thesis characterised the capital city as a hot-bed of ‘Islamic terrorists’, it was East End Jews who were said to pose an inassimilable threat. The *Evening News* (22 May 1891), for example, stated that “[t]he advance of Socialistic and anarchical opinion in London is commensurate with the increased volume of foreign immigration.” Areas in which relatively high numbers of Jews settled in the East End of London were referred to as ‘colonies’, apparently “swarming with socialists and Anarchists of every type and almost invariably a Jewish immigrant” (ibid. quoted in Holmes, 1979). During conscription at the time of the First World War, Jews were unwilling to align themselves with a Czarist Russia that had been responsible for the pogroms. Yet, at the same time, public discourses were widely presenting Russian socialism as the ideology of ‘the Jews’. As Holmes (1979: 208) recounts

In common with the Britons, a central stress was placed upon Britain and the British Empire as the repositories of Christian civilisation and it was this system which was believed to be under attack from Jewish influences...while the expression of this fear varied to some extent according to the writer, it was often linked to Jewish involvement with Bolshevism. In the course of such discussions – which like any other form of socialism was regarded as an alien creed – could be described as nothing less than an attempt to gain world primacy in line with the prophecies contained in The Protocols.

In the words of S. H. Jeyes, nearly all Jews were “politically unfit to be suddenly transplanted into those democratic institutions for which we have adapted ourselves by a long course of self-governing liberty” (quoted in Garrard 1992: 53). Furthermore, Jews were also characterised as preying upon freedom of speech and other liberties in the manner that Muslims were described

in the previous sections. Indeed the connection with the contemporary representation of a clash of civilisations seems striking. Connolly (2005: 6) makes precisely this point

The cold war generated McCarthyism as an extreme response to threats that the Soviet Union posed to Christian faith and capitalism together. The terrorism of Al Qaeda, in turn generates new fears and hostilities, and priorities. The McCarthyism of our day, if it arrives, will connect internal state security to an exclusionary version of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Such discursive linkages were evident during and after 1917 as the Civil War in Russia pitched Bolshevik and British interests against one another. Under the ownership of Lord Northcliffe, *The Times* was implicated in this discourse by, amongst other things, underpinning its critique of communism with reference to a 'Jewish-Bolshevik' conspiracy. What is of most interest here is the intentional use of religious references and the conflation between religion and terrorism. For example, the projection of a Jewish vengeance via Bolshevism informed *The Times*' accusation that those who supported peace with the Bolsheviks at the Paris peace conference of 1919 were doing so *because* they were Jewish. This campaign culminated in the publication of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* by *The Times* alongside an article entitled 'The Jewish Peril' (8 May, 1920 reproduced in Kaddish, 1992: 31).

It is helpful to compare past similarities to current public and media discourse which assimilates the threat of terror with anti-Muslim sentiment, in the way that Jews became the common denominator in anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism. The fact that such similar trends are visible in the anti-Semitism of the early twentieth century and the explicit anti-Muslim sentiments in circulation now, suggest that the distinctions between 'racial' and religious categories are less impervious than current formulations of civil and criminal legislation allows. Indeed, it is a recognition of this claim that has facilitated certain protections for Jewish minorities in the past. However, as chapter five reviewed, this recognition has not yet been expanded to afford Muslim minorities today the same level of protection.



#### 4.2. Inassimilable & problematic

This last point might be drawn out further by considering the ways in which current conceptions of Muslim cultural dysfunction are presented as explanations for what is described as 'Islamic terrorism'. Indeed, some commentators have argued that Muslims are inherently problematical because they are incapable of making certain trans-cultural changes

When a generation of Lenny Henry and Meera Syals made it possible to invite others to laugh with them about their own communities, those communities entered into the canon of Britishness. [...] ...the most dangerous divide now is in culture - and that means Muslim. British Muslims arrested last week as terror suspects had families as British as Meera Syal's-yet culturally they inhabit another universe. (Toynbee, 7 April 2004, *The Guardian*).

Whilst, as we saw in chapter three (sec 10), Werbner (2004) draws a more nuanced distinction between anglicized and religious South-Asian diasporas, *The Guardian* columnist, Polly Toynbee, presents Muslims as particularly problematic because they cannot ridicule themselves, and this denies them entry 'into the canon of Britishness'. In considering this claim, we should be careful not to mistake the acceptance of minority cultural expressions by a mainstream orthodoxy as being the sole yard-stick of minority integration, particularly since the cultural specificities of one minority identity might not be commodified or consumed in the same way as another. This returns us to the different types of multiculturalism discussed in chapter one (sec 1.7.), and by reflecting on these different concepts, we can see that Toynbee is confusing the issue of how certain forms of difference may or might not lend themselves to synthesis, with the separate issue of whether certain forms of difference are exclusionary by their own logic *rather than circumstance* (i.e. in the face of majority contempt).

As a form of pathologising, this represents one of the key techniques within rhetorical argumentation strategies that present a series of general assumptions about Muslim communities in a way that belies any variation within this group. Without any regard for the contingent and ever-renegotiated nature of Britishness (Gilroy, 1987), Toynbee disqualifies British Muslims

from it. It is a tendency she shares with Charles Moore who, in the following extract, subscribes to an equally revealing fatalism

Once there are Islamic financial institutions, how long will it be before Muslims insist that the state and business direct all their monetary dealings with Muslims through these institutions (boycotting businesses with Jewish connections en route)? How long before Muslims, extending the logic of their concentration in places like Bradford and Leicester, seek to establish their own law within these areas, the germ of a state within a state? And how diverse would such a state be? (21 August, 2004, *The Daily Telegraph*).

Moore not only emphasises an extreme example of many potential outcomes, but does so in a way that misleads the audience into believing that such an outcome is inevitable. Holmes (1979: 20) has suggested that similar techniques were used to suggest Jewish communities desired self-segregation and were attempting to achieve these subversive ends through the malign exercise of Jewish social, political and financial power. This was particularly true of the newer Jewish immigrants who were attributed a degree of inflexibility derived from their orthodoxy. The practice of working on Sundays, for example, was presented as un-English (Gartner, 1973: 52), and the ensuing opposition often reflected a rank and file anti-Semitism evidenced in the words of union leader Ben Tillett, in the official Independent Labour Party (ILP) paper *Labour Leader*

If getting on is the most desirable thing in this earth then the Jew, as the most consistent and determined money grabber we know is worthy of the greatest respect. That his money grabbing is not universally respected only proves that the bulk of civilised nations, even now, do not believe in the commercialistic idea of clean hands and blood-stained money (19 December 1894, quoted in Cohen: 1985: 76).

In the present context, the unwillingness to uncritically conform to secular liberal values is equally salient and is being construed as the greatest obstacle facing Muslim integration. In both cases there emerges a tendency toward malign exaggeration of religious and cultural customs, which is at a remove from the reality of these groups' actual social, economic and political power. For example, both numerically and in terms of social, political, and economic power, Jewish East-Enders were, for all intents and purposes, relatively powerless. Yet, they were portrayed as exerting enough power to be able to carve out a 'new Jerusalem' on British soil. Similarly, the



topic of Muslims and Islamic law, or *Shari'a*, is often used to exaggerate a potential threat. As Richard Littlejohn of the *Daily Mail* bemoans

There must be no more concessions, no special treatment, no more apologies for perceived slights for which we are not responsible. Otherwise where does it end? Will we all have to give up alcohol, will all women have to wear the jilbab, will Britain become a place where everything stops for prayers, simply to satisfy Muslim sensibilities? (10 February, 2006).

This was exemplified by the incredibly sensationalist reportage of the Policy Exchange's (2007) report on Muslim social attitudes - 'Living Apart Together'. This generated an avalanche of alarming headlines from broadsheets and tabloids across the political spectrum. *The Sun* told its readers that 'Islam kids 'reject UK' whilst the normally fair minded *Independent* uncritically adopted Policy Exchange's official line in reporting that "Young Muslims are 'more militant'". The *Daily Mail* went further in characterising Muslim youth as 'A Generation of Outsiders' whilst *The Daily Telegraph* rounded it up by reporting that "40% want Sharia law in Britain". One of the astonishing tendencies displayed throughout this reportage was an uncritical acceptance of the findings from a think-tank that has an explicit political agenda. Michael Gove, the Conservative MP and author of the book *Celsius 7/7 - How the West's Policy of Appeasement Has Provoked Fundamentalist Terror and What Has to Be Done Now*, is a founding chairperson, Charles Moore is another key figure, and the report's lead author, Munira Mirza, is a long time critic of Muslims and Race Equality.

The report itself confirmed that younger Muslims are more religiously observant than their parents. Thus 37 percent of their sample of 16 to 24 yr olds would like to see more aspects *Shar'ia* law in Britain, and that this is roughly twice as many as a sample their parents' age. Yet it is arguable, for example, that the vast majority of people who describe themselves as Muslim in Britain already subscribe to *Shar'ia* by fasting during *Ramadan*, eating *Halal* food, donating to charity, observing prayers, celebrating *Eid* and so forth. Whilst there are undoubtedly aspects of *Shar'ia* that sanction capital punishment, these form only very small part of a vast corpus and are

no less subject to debate than those non-*Shar'ia* practices of capital punishment currently exercised in some liberal-democracies. But these qualifications were omitted in both the report's analysis as well as the press coverage which characterised British Muslims who aspire toward some *Shar'ia* as medieval (indeed the *Daily Star* took its readers back a million years to the paleolithic era with the headline: "BRIT MUSLIMS WANT THE STONE AGE"). This is comparable to denouncing British Christians for believing in the Resurrection and demanding that British Jews abandon the Talmud, and it is arguable that such hyperbole is capable of fuelling moral panics that do more to distort and reify concerns over minority groups than to precipitate solutions, particularly when materially ungrounded claims concerning the disastrous aspirations of minorities are consistently articulated as self-evident truths. In another example of how Muslims and Islam have been characterised as anti-modern and antipathetic to democratic and human rights. Will Hutton, for example, writing in *The Observer*, argues that

Islam is predominantly sexist and pre-Enlightenment and that is the core of the problem both within the Islamic world and in its relationship with the West. Thus, the West has to object to Islamic sexism whether arranged marriage, headscarves, limiting career options or the more extreme manifestations, female circumcision and stoning women for adultery (11, January 2004).

Hutton's argumentation strategy opens with a sentence which functions to simultaneously assume and conclude that Islam and "Islamic practices" are predominantly "pre-Enlightenment". The result of this understanding becomes apparent when seeking to explain "Islam's relationship with the West". The latter is counterpoised as a corrective to pre-Enlightenment exemplars of "Islamic sexism"; practices deemed to cause the problematic nature of Islam's incapacity to relate to a non-sexist, egalitarian West. So for "West" read "Modern". With this in mind, Muslim contributions to British society should be restricted because what Muslim men do to Muslim women is both symptomatic of broader "Islamic practices" and is antipathetic to "our" beliefs. A combative response is, then, required since "their own cultural context" is evidently unable to renew itself without a civilising hand. Such a process necessarily begins by shoring up "our" own values and positions all Muslim practices in conflict with liberal freedoms.



This sort of argumentation is not dissimilar to that which, less than a hundred years ago, was presenting Jews as inassimilable. For not only a variety of assumptions and characterisations projected *onto* Jewish minorities, but public and media discourses maintained that these traits and trends were being actively pursued *by* Jewish communities. Arnold White, for example, an influential commentator of that era, writing in the *Contemporary Review*, characterised the Jewish experience in Britain as

...not that of numbers, nor of habits, nor of occupations of the immigrants but the fact that, good or bad or indifferent the orthodox immigrants belong to a race and cling to a community that prefers to remain aloof from the mainstream of our national life, by shunning intermarriage with Anglo-Saxons (*Contemporary Review* xxii 1897: 738).

White's claim entails a rejection of cultural pluralism in favour of an absolute identification with the values and aspirations of an undefined 'British national life'. Although undefined, this national life is constructed against the presence of Jewish minorities through the implication of incompatibility between British and Jewish interests, both domestically and internationally. Like many others at the time, White insisted that integration was not a religious question and had nothing to do with whether the destitute immigrant believed in the Bible or the Torah (Holmes, 1979: 105). It was, in truth, a racial question. This was a common and salient position at the time coherently exemplified in a letter to the *Jewish Chronicle* (21 November 1902 - signed by an anonymous 'Mile End Socialist')

'Jew versus Gentile' will be my battle cry at every election as long as life is spared ... the Jew has made himself obnoxious through the incarnate instinct of his race to every nation where he has now emigrated. This is an historical fact and beyond controversy.

These views proceeded to inform governmental thinking, as is evident in the form of the *Royal Commission on Alien Immigration* (1903: 178, 298) which listed Whitechapel and Mile End as a 'Jerusalem' or a 'Second Palestine', reporting complaints that Jews too often "lived 'according to their traditions, usages and customs' in a way which was wholly deleterious to the English man" (Holmes, 1979: 17). That public anxieties over perceived Jewish self-segregation were mired in a

racialised resentment was particularly evident when it came to the prospect of accommodating difference because

[I]t was in fact a persistent theme that Jews kept themselves part. 'When in Rome do as the Romans do' was observed as a guide to social behaviour by 'every race except the alien Jews', it was claimed. It was pointed out that Jews ignored local 'customs', 'religious observances', 'days of rest', and contravened established morality (Holmes, *ibid.*).

These conceptions of incompatibility and unassailability were not solely derived from ideas of self-segregation, however, but ran deeper in being attributable to the intrinsic cultural disposition or make-up of Jews as a race or nation. For example, the *East London Advertiser* consistently ran editorials decrying the frustrating maintenance of a Jewish identity or ways of life

People of any other nation, after being in England for a short time, assimilate themselves with the native race and by and by lose nearly all their foreign trace. But the Jews never do. A Jew is always a Jew. No doubt this is due to their desire for the formation of a new Hebrew nation, a fact which inclines them to look upon themselves as pilgrims in a strange land (6 May 1899, quoted in Holmes, 1979: 17).

In summary then, we can discern that some similarities in the public construction of Jews and Muslims include the use of categorical assumptions about a whole group (even though such assumptions are often based either on no evidence at all, or the actions or words of very small groups or individuals). These claims, therefore, make no allowances for the variation and divergences evident in almost all social groups. In addition, these constructions often make assumptions that religious orthodoxy is derived from the fact of difference itself, specifically with respect to the view that an adherence to (non-Christian) religious law is itself a barrier to being British. Importantly, there are evident assumptions about dual loyalties and an adherence to dysfunctional cultural practices, in the face of what are assumed to be uncontested social norms.

## **5. The emergence of a British Muslim press**

The sorts of tendencies displayed in the mainstream press coverage of Islam and Muslims in Britain, specifically the propensity for mischaracterisation and negative generalisation, have



informed the creation of alternative Muslim media sources which set out to reflect “the Muslim or Islamic identity of both its producers and readers” and offer a perspective “more aware of and sympathetic to Muslims” (Ahmed, 2005: 111). In Britain, publications such as *The Muslim News*, *Q-News*, *Crescent International*, *Impact International* and *Trends*, media committees at the MCB and FAIR, and radio stations such as *Radio Ummah* and *Radio Ramadan* have increasingly mobilised alternative views to those surveyed above. As Inayat Bunglawala of the MCB puts it

We’ve often been in a very uneven playing field in the mainstream media, with the Tabloid press often rushing to air the most outlandish voices, the most radical voices at the expense of ordinary Muslims. Because these are often given huge publicity without a necessary context as to how on the fringe the radical groups are or what their numbers amount to compared to the mainstream Muslim view. So in the end the MCB try to counteract that unfair portrayal of the British-Muslim community at the same time as being the focus of it ourselves! (Interview, 21 May 2006).

The content and outlook of each of these media committees and news sources is inevitably informed by the background of the source itself, including the ideological or political stance of its editors and journalists. This is also determined by whether the aim is to provide a current affairs source of information or one more concerned with addressing social and cultural issues. For example, most Muslim media press publications advertise ‘Muslim relevant’ events and activities; publicise charity appeals and often include book reviews.

There are clear differences, however, between some publications so it is important not to amalgamate the various types of publications into a singular genre. For example, *The Invitation* offers an accessible accounts of current affairs, whilst others, such as *Q-News*, attach much more emphasis to the impact of British and international politics on Muslims in Britain. The latter was created as a fortnightly tabloid publication, before it evolved into its current, monthly magazine format under the present editorship of Fareena Alam. It describes itself as:

Britain's leading Muslim magazine, providing independent analysis, critique and review of politics, culture and ideas. We are read by second and third generation British Muslims, parliamentarians, policy makers and educators. A third of our readership are not Muslim giving us unique place in the market as a publication

which communicates the rich Muslim experience to a diverse audience. The philosophy of *Q-News* is a combination of style, appeal and relevance to the Muslim community living in the west and around the world. Over the years, *Q-News* has repeatedly set the agenda, rather than react to it. Our chief interest lies in the development of a unique and relevant Western Muslim discourse.<sup>6</sup>

In these terms of encouraging a 'Western Muslim discourse', Fareena Alam has herself described the issues that most concerned her before taking editorial control:

I was struggling with questions of who do I want to be: a Muslim journalist or a journalist who happens to be Muslim? Islam has an incredible capacity to develop distinct cultural forms and expression while maintaining its universal principles... I want British Islam to reflect the best of my - and others' - faith and citizenship.<sup>7</sup>

Whilst such publications are a fairly recent emergence, there is clearly a desire amongst them to move beyond solely Muslim audiences, with the editor of *Impact International* describing his belief that "in the course of time, the Muslim media are also going to be part of the mainstream" (quoted in Ahmed, 2005: 112). Another publication, the *Muslim News*, epitomises this conviction in its determination to reach out beyond its constituency of Muslim readers, whilst at the same time taking pride in its role in elevating and accentuating British Muslim-consciousness. It states that "the Muslim News has been one of the pioneers of recognising the Muslim community as a diverse faith group with a common British Muslim identity". Part of this process has been mediated by a remit in which

The Muslim News reports on what the non-Muslim media does not report. In its 15 years of publication, it has exposed media's and establishments institutionalised Islamophobia on various issues - politics, education, employment and religion.<sup>8</sup>

## 6. Conclusions

This chapter examined public and media discourse on Muslims in Britain. Taking its cue from Du Bois' account of double consciousness, it has argued that negative public and media discourses on Muslims in Britain can impair how Muslims see themselves reflected back. It has

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<sup>6</sup> See Q-News website: <http://www.q-news.com/about.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in the NS Interview – "The petrodollar-funded literalists think their version is the real Islam. I'm for an Islam that is at home in Britain", Rachel Aspden, *New statesman*, 27 February, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> See 'About Us' at *The Muslim News*: <http://www.muslimnews.co.uk>



argued that this is an example of a reactive Muslim-consciousness since it has informed an increasing tendency for Muslims to represent themselves through a proliferation of Muslim media sources. These Muslim media sources have simultaneously sought to pluralise the mainstream in reaching beyond Muslim audiences. By exploring some of the ways in which Islam and Muslims are portrayed across salient axes - and comparatively in relation to some other groups – it pre-empts the discussion in the next chapter of race and racism to excavate salient accounts of citizenship and belonging, and the implication for a British-Muslim-consciousness therein. It is these issues that are further examined in the following chapter, through an evaluation of the legal protections afforded to Muslim minorities in Britain.

## Chapter Five

### Muslims and discrimination: Muslim-consciousness in re-action?

#### 1. Introduction

Whilst chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), Julie Mellor once complained that “Britain’s equality laws are a mess. Inconsistent and incomplete, they offer different levels of protection for different groups and none at all for others” (*The Guardian*, 16 May, 2002).<sup>1</sup> In holding this view she was not alone.<sup>2</sup> Commentators and public policy analysts long concerned with the welfare of Britain’s ethnic, racial and religious minorities (Parekh, 1990; Modood, 1992; 1994; CBMI 1997, 2004; CMEB, 2000) have each argued that the broad development of anti-discrimination legislation in the United Kingdom has been inconsistent. That this is acutely and disproportionately felt by Muslims in the levels of protection they are afforded, is a complaint frequently made by an increasing number of Muslim organisations (UKACIA, 1993; MCB, 1997; FAIR, 2002; IHRC, 2004a).<sup>3</sup>

- **What this means, however, and whether such complaints are valid - in being based upon substantive cases - are key contextual questions for this chapter.**

In this chapter, the meaning of double-consciousness differs from that of the last where it theorised social formations ‘striving’ to create plural constituencies of participation as components of Muslim-consciousness. It is adopted here to explore how certain conceptions

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Cohen, former head of CRE legal policy, echoes many of Julie Mellor’s concerns when she states that “for various reasons the government appears willing to introduce legislation on one ground or within one ground that is inconsistent with the legislation they have recently passed. Equality legislation in this country is a mess: for example, in the RRA we have two different definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, different rules regarding where the burden of proof will lie and gender and race equality legislation are completely out of sync with each other” (Interview, 7 March, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, several years ago Hepple, Coussey and Choudhury (2000) calculated that a comprehensive picture of Britain’s discrimination legislation would need to consult at least thirty Acts, thirty-eight Statutory Instruments, eleven Codes of Practice and twelve EC Directives and Recommendations.

<sup>3</sup> Amongst others, Arzu Merali of the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) argues that the level of anti-discrimination legislation protecting Muslims in Britain has been “inconsistent and getting worse. It’s difficult to say that there was a point that it was ok; the last fifteen years have been quite turbulent with the development of Islamophobia being quite distinct in that period. Not that it hasn’t existed before, but it has been recognised at a time of a general crisis of confidence in the current legislation to protect minorities per se. I think what we can say without doubt is that the situation in the last few years has been getting worse, not just with regards to legislation but with the lack of political will to deal with it” (Interview, 12 June 2006, see also Ameli and Merali et al., 2004).



of discrimination might prevent Muslim minorities from being full participants in British society. For example, a key aspect of double-consciousness describes the way in which minorities feel alienated and disenfranchised because they are sidelined in the political structure of their society; remaining bound by the *requirements* but not experiencing the *rewards* of citizenship. In this regard, as Arzu Merali of the IHRC has already outlined, one persistent complaint concerns a perceived lack of willingness to take seriously both the forms of cultural racism and Islamophobia examined in Part B of chapter three, alongside the legitimacy of identities accentuating Muslim particularity.

- **Reporting on the second of three case studies, the present chapter extends the analysis of how a recognition and reflection of the substantive elements of a Muslim-consciousness within anti-discrimination formulae might attend to the sorts of double-consciousness described in chapter two.**

What this chapter seeks to do, therefore, is three-fold. Firstly, it examines how we have reached the situation described by Julie Mellor, Arzu Merali and Barbara Cohen, and to what extent these multitude of legislative instruments are effective. Second, it identifies where Muslims in Britain are positioned within this legal framework. This question thus understands these two issues as being interdependent, since what will be examined is how and in what ways anti-discrimination legislation has historically attended to the experiences or conditions of prejudice faced by Muslims in Britain. One way to examine this is through a consideration of the antecedents and material outcomes of current anti-discrimination legislation, with a particular focus upon the extent to which they are informed by the types of racial equality and race relations formulations discussed in chapters one and three. Thirdly, this chapter considers the impact and scope of new EC legislation, which, for the first time, directly addresses religious discrimination. This will proceed through an understanding of its broader implications, specifically its material capacity and limitations.

By applying the discussion of cultural racism and Islamophobia set out in chapter three, this chapter evaluates the way in which these racisms are, or are, not recognised within current discrimination legislation.

- **It is argued that if we reject a normative grammar of race and accept that legal categories of race and ethnicity must not be foreclosed to the complexities of social contingencies, that include periods of Muslim racialisation, a coherent argument for Muslim inclusion under existing anti-discrimination formulae can be made.**

Centrally, this chapter shows how the efforts for Muslim inclusion perfectly illustrate the movement from a historically-ascribed identity to a politically self-defined identity that contests Muslim-specific discrimination and Islamophobia.

## **2. Anti-discrimination legislation**

In the pursuit of some kind of equality of opportunity, and as a criterion of the civic status conferred under a tradition of British multicultural citizenship set out in chapter one, it is a historical fact that Britain's anti-discrimination and equal opportunities legislation has taken an instrumentalist approach. That is, it has often proceeded through group specific legislation that has outlawed discrimination in terms of race and ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and so forth, whilst encouraging the monitoring of institutional under-representation amongst such groups, each of which has been moderated through legal precedent and introduced sequentially according to the political climate of the day. In the following account, Squires (2004: 75) offers a helpful catalogue of this development of anti-discrimination legislation in Britain

The Labour governments of the 1970s introduced a range of equality laws designed to remedy group discrimination (in preparation for joining the European Economic Community): The Equal Pay Act 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA), the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976. Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome (signed by the UK in 1973) also established the principle of equal pay. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) were established to uphold these laws. The Disability Discrimination Act was introduced in 1995 and the Disability Rights Commission established in 2000. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 amended the 1976 Act (fulfilling recommendation 11 of



the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report) and The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 implements the EC Article 13 Race Directive.<sup>4</sup>

Conspicuously absent from this accumulated legislation are any specific instruments explicitly addressing discrimination on the grounds of real or perceived religious identity, or grouping. Although case law has established precedents in the application of Race Relations legislation to prevent discrimination against some religious minorities, namely Sikh<sup>5</sup> (cf *Panesar v. Nestle Co Ltd*, 1980 [IRLR 64]; *Mandla v. Dowell Lee* (1983) [2AC 548]; *Singh v. British Rail Engineering Ltd* (1986) [ICR 22]; *Dhanjal v. British Steel plc* (1994) [unreported]) and Jewish minorities (cf *Seide v. Gillette Industries Ltd* (1980) [IRLR 427]; *Morgan v. CSC & British Library* (1990) [DCLD 6 19177/89]), it has not been extended to Muslim minorities. This is because Muslims in Britain have not been recognised as an ethnic or racial grouping within the application of Race Relations legislation or the legal precedents that this has facilitated. In a somewhat tautological fashion, the RRA extends protections to racial or ethnic groups conceived in the following way

Racial groups are those defined by racial grounds, i.e. race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins. All racial groups are protected from unlawful racial discrimination under the RRA.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> It is interesting that Squires attributes the development of some of this legislation to Britain's impending involvement in the EEC and EU more broadly. This raises the question as to how impending inclusion into the EU has also affected the construction of discrimination legislation, if at all, in other countries. Recognising this supports Favell's (1998) view that comprehending conceptions of anti-discrimination (as part of an equation of citizenship) makes much greater sense through a cross-national European perspective, which can help us to learn about pathologies or remedies in relation to any one country. See chapter three for a critique of his position (sec. 7), but it is worth repeating here that such a perspective risks ignoring – or at least under emphasising – the influence of the post-colonial and US civil rights thinking on British race relations, which was evaluated in chapter three (sec. 3-3.3.), as well as the important internal debates in specifically responding to this influence, alongside other debates that have exercised British social science on matters of race, identity and citizenship (see Banton, 1991; Miles, 1994, and Dummett, 1998). For a descriptive comparison with Germany as well as the US see Joppke (1996). Where the adoption of current EU directives sit in relation to this argument is discussed below.

<sup>5</sup> Although Sikhs were recognised as an ethnic group in *Panesar v. Nestle Co Ltd* [1979] IRLR 64, the implications of this adjudication were given their fullest expression in the House of Lords ruling that accompanied *Mandla v. Dowell Lee* (1983) [2 AC 548], discussed below. This is because in the former case it was deemed 'justifiable' within the meaning of section 1(1)(b)(ii) of the Race Relation Act (1976) that the Nestle Company should require Sikh applicants to shave their beards for reasons of work place hygiene, notwithstanding that the proportion of Sikhs who could conscientiously comply with this requirement was considerably smaller than the proportion of non-Sikhs.

<sup>6</sup> Nationality meaning 'national origin' was added to the Act in 1976 following the House of Lords decision in *Ealing Borough Council ex parte Zesko v. Race Relations Board* (1972) [AC 342] where it was held that Mr Zesko had not been unlawfully discriminated against by Ealing Council who had refused to add his name to a council house waiting list on the grounds that he was not a British national i.e. prior to the 1976 amendment nationality had meant something closer to race rather than citizenship



A clearer description might be to state that the “multiform” concept of race in Race Relations legislation is adopted to outlaw “inferior treatment perceived to be based on colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origins” (Modood, 2005b: 113). In the way that this has been applied, however, the courts<sup>7</sup> have tried to operationalise an understanding of ethnic origin that functions as a wider concept than race. For example, in the case of *Mandla v. Dowell Lee* (1983) that is discussed below, it is clear that the House of Lords concluded that there are several characteristics relevant to the identification of ethnic and racial groupings to be afforded protection. This requires some explanation and elaboration, firstly, with reference to the development of Race Relations discrimination legislation generally and, secondly, through an illustrative discussion of the case identified above.

## 2.1. Race Relations Legislation

Conceived in response to the sorts of racial conflict witnessed in the anti-West Indian violence of the late 1950s in Notting Hill, and the fear of potential future conflict (Shakur, 1998)<sup>8</sup>, there has been legislation in the United Kingdom outlawing discrimination on racial grounds since the introduction of the Race Relations Act (RRA) 1965.<sup>9</sup> This established relatively moderate legislation outlawing discrimination in access to premises open to the public such as hotels, bars and restaurants. Three years later, and running parallel to the introduction of further immigration legislation in the form of the Commonwealth Immigration Act (1968), another RRA extended these protections to the spheres of employment, housing, education and the provision of further goods, facilities and services. The main legislation currently in force is the RRA 1976 (as amended in 2000 & 2003). This provides individuals

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within the remit of the legislation. See Racial Group in CRE glossary  
<http://www.cre.gov.uk/duty/grr/glossary.html>

<sup>7</sup> Particularly the House of Lords, in its capacity as the highest court in the UK before the European Court of Human Rights.

<sup>8</sup> Although this is the most commonly held story of the inception of this legislation, according to Anthony Lester (who played a key role in drafting the original bill) it is equally true that “[w]hen the first Race Relations Act was enacted in 1965, with Sir Frank Soskice at the Home Office, it was done in part to an increase in racial anti-Semitism” (Lester, Harsard, 9 November 2005). This is discussed further below.

<sup>9</sup> Prior to which Common Law had offered very limited and largely ineffectual protections against racial discrimination. See Rawlings (1985) for an analysis of laissez-faire doctrines and their influence upon the judiciary’s view of race equality legislation.



with the right to bring civil proceedings for discrimination, and includes major innovations such as a distinction between *indirect* alongside *direct* discrimination (discussed below), and a statutory duty of 'positive action' (see footnote 10 of this chapter). In addition, it furnished the newly established Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) with the powers to conduct formal investigations as well as to assist individual complainants. This legislation was strengthened by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 following the inquiry into the London Metropolitan Police investigation of the murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence (McPherson Report, 1999), which extended its scope to cover nearly all functions of public authorities (for the first time including the police but still excluding the immigration service), simultaneously widening the remit of the statutory duty on public authorities to promote race equality.<sup>10</sup> The RRA has now been further amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Regulations 2003, which are intended to transpose the EC Race Directive outlined below (CRE Good Practice Guide, 2004). There have been several cases of discrimination pursued under Race Relations legislation that are relevant to a consideration of the legal protections currently available to Muslims in Britain, but the case of *Mandla v. Dowell Lee* (1983) provides the most helpful example.

## 2.2. The case of *Mandla v. Dowell Lee* and Park Grove School<sup>11</sup>

This case began after the headteacher of a private school in Birmingham refused to enrol as a pupil to the school an orthodox Sikh boy (who wore long hair under a turban) unless the boy removed the turban and cut his hair. The headteacher's reasons for this refusal were that

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<sup>10</sup> Under section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended in 2000) all public authorities have a general duty to promote race equality, that requires them to eliminate racial discrimination, ensure equality of opportunity, and promote good 'race relations' through such things as outreach work and awareness training. There are also specific duties such as the implementation of a written policy on race equality, perhaps as part of an overall policy; an assessment of the impact of new and current policies on ethnic minority staff, students and other service users, the monitoring of recruitment and progression of ethnic minority staff and students, and monitoring grievance, disciplinary, appraisal, staff development and termination procedures by ethnicity. The Secretary of State is also empowered to impose specific duties on key, listed public authorities. Broadly, these selected authorities must publish a Race Equalities Scheme and meet specific employment duties (the scheme is effectively a strategy and action plan).

<sup>11</sup> Sources outlining the details of this case include The Liverpool Law Review (1983) and the *Mandla v. Dowell Lee* House of Lords Transcript available at [http://www.hrcr.org/safrica/equality/Mandla\\_DowellLee.htm](http://www.hrcr.org/safrica/equality/Mandla_DowellLee.htm).

the wearing of a turban, being a manifestation of the boy's religious origins, would accentuate religious and social distinctions in the school which, being a school based on the Christian faith, the headteacher wished to minimise. In response, the boy's family sought a declaration in the County Court that this refusal to admit him, unless he removed his turban and cut his hair, amounted to discrimination against a member of a racial group under section 1(1)(b) of the RRA (1976). This maintains that

A person discriminates against another in any circumstances relevant for the purposes of any provision of this Act if--(a) on racial grounds he treats that other less favorably than he treats or would treat other persons or (b) he applies to that other a requirement or condition which he applies or would apply equally to persons not of the same racial group as that other but--(i) which is such that the proportion of persons of the same racial group as that other who can comply with it is considerably smaller than the proportion of persons not of that racial group who can comply with it and (ii) which he cannot show to be justifiable irrespective of the colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins of the person to whom it is applied and (iii) which is to the detriment of that other because he cannot comply with it.<sup>12</sup>

Close scrutiny of this passage reveals how the Act contains scope for redress in cases of *indirect* discrimination, when an individual member or entire racial group cannot comply with a requirement, or if that requirement will have a disproportionately negative impact upon a certain racial group. Indirect discrimination thus denotes "a rule, policy or procedure that is the same for everybody, but may specifically exclude a person or group from a benefit of

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<sup>12</sup> This section is modelled on 1(1)(b) of the Sex Discrimination Act (1975), which was introduced a year earlier, and results, on the one hand, from a practical concern to enact tested legislation and, on the other, a shrewd political manoeuvre by the then Home Secretary to find cross-party support for Race-Relations legislation from unlikely quarters that had already supported Sex Discrimination legislation. The cross-party support also empowered the CRE with the authority to issue legally binding non-discrimination notices (see Lester, 1998). Indeed, part of the provenance for the development of a more extensive definition of discrimination as including 'indirect' discrimination, was the US Supreme Court precedent in *Griggs v Duke*. This witnessed a shift away from formal equality towards a more sophisticated understanding of equality and discrimination, and paved the way for overcoming initial resistance towards endorsement of the earliest examples of positive action in British anti-discrimination law (Sooben, 1990: 38). Roy Jenkins summed up his new attitude in comments on positive action measures in the Sex Discrimination Act in the following terms: "I believe that we should not be so blindly loyal to the principle of formal equality as to ignore the actual and practical inequalities between the sexes still less to prohibit positive action to help men and women to compete on genuinely equal terms and to overcome an undesirable historical link" (Hansard, vol. 899, column 514). The choice of the civil model, rather than the criminal law paradigm, by the Street Committee was based on the Ives Quinn Act first introduced in New York in 1945, which had introduced the idea of a special administrative machinery to deal with problems of discrimination. The subsequent prevalence of the idea of anti-discrimination commissions in the form of the Race Relations Board (RRB) and subsequently the EOC and CRE were also modelled on the US type administrative bodies (see Sooben, 1990).



opportunity, and may have unequal effects on different groups within the organisation” (Fahrenheit and Kleiner, 2001: 148). This contrasts with the more obvious form of *direct* discrimination which needs to be understood less in terms of the motive and more in terms of the decision, i.e. if an employer treats an ethnic minority employee less well because of customer disapproval of ethnic minorities, or if a trade union operates a colour bar.

In terms of the Mandla case, the County Court judge dismissed the original petition on the grounds that Sikhs were not a racial or ethnic group within the definition of the Act, specifically because they could not be defined by reference to ethnic or national origins.<sup>13</sup> When the boy’s family appealed to the next, higher court, they did so with the argument that *the term ‘ethnic’ embraced more than merely a racial concept, and included a cultural, linguistic or religious community*. The Court of Appeal, however, decided that Sikhism was primarily a religion and that the adherents of a religion did not constitute a ‘racial group’ within the meaning of the 1976 Act and, hence, discrimination with regard to religious practice was not unlawful under the RRA. The court’s rationale remained that a group could be defined by reference to its ethnic origins within sections 3(1) of the 1976 Act *only* if that group could be distinguished from other groups by definable racial characteristics, and that Sikhs had no such characteristics peculiar to Sikhs.

In a final attempt that was politically and materially supported by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), which itself sought further clarification on the matter, the boy’s family appealed to the House of Lords, where Lord Fraser of Tullybelton outlined the Law Lords working definition of ethnic groups as incorporating, amongst others, (i) a long shared history the group is conscious of as distinguishing it from other groups, (ii) a cultural tradition

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<sup>13</sup> In making his ruling Lord Denning stated that “Sikhs, as a group, cannot be distinguished by reference to any racial characteristics whatever. They are only to be distinguished by their religion and culture. This is not an ethnic difference at all” (quoted in the Mandla House of Lords ruling). It is worth noting the anomaly here that Sikhs had already been recognised as an ethnic group, by no less than a Court of Appeal, three years earlier in *Panesar v. Nestle Co Ltd* (1980) and that this was little recognised at the time of Lord Denning’s ruling. One reason for the oversight might be that the adjudication in that case went against the claimant because it was deemed ‘justifiable’ within the remit of Race Relation legislation that the Nestle Company should require Sikhs to shave their beards for reasons of Public Health in application for employment. It nevertheless remains an interesting oversight.



of its own, including family and social customs and manners, often but not necessarily associated with religious observance; and (iii) either a common geographical origin, or descent from a small number of common ancestors - which is one of the main criterion for identifying group membership, including 'perceived' group membership.<sup>14</sup> Using these criteria, the House of Lords upheld the boy's appeal, and made the following statement in terms of the ability of Sikhs to comply with the school's uniform policy, which is worth quoting at length

It is obvious that Sikhs, like anyone else, 'can' refrain from wearing a turban, if 'can' is construed literally. But if the broad cultural/historic meaning of ethnic is the appropriate meaning of the word in the 1976 Act, then a literal reading of the word 'can' would deprive Sikhs and members of other groups defined by reference to their ethnic origins of much of the protection which Parliament evidently intended the 1976 Act to afford to them. They 'can' comply with almost any requirement or condition if they are willing to give up their distinctive customs and cultural rules. On the other hand, if ethnic means inherited or unalterable, as the Court of Appeal thought it did, then 'can' ought logically to be read literally. The word 'can' is used with many shades of meaning. In the context of section 1(1)(b)(i) of the 1976 Act it must, in my opinion, have been intended by Parliament to be read not as meaning 'can physically', so as to indicate a theoretical possibility, but as meaning 'can in practice' or 'can consistently with the customs and cultural conditions of the racial group'. [...] Accordingly I am of opinion that the 'no turban' rule was not one with which the appellant could, in the relevant sense, comply. [...] I recognize that 'ethnic' conveys a flavour of race but it cannot...have been used in the 1976 Act as in a strict racial or biological sense. For one thing, it would be absurd to assume that Parliament can have intended that membership of a particular racial group should depend on scientific proof that a person possessed the relevant distinctive biological characteristics... it is clear that parliament must have used the word in some more popular sense [...].<sup>15</sup>

In coming to this decision, Lord Fraser argued that "it is inconceivable that Parliament would have legislated against racial discrimination intending that the protection should not apply either to Christians or (above all) to Jews" (ibid.), thus further consolidating the protection of Jewish religious minorities under the Race Relations legislation previously achieved in *Seide*

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<sup>14</sup> There were also four other, arguably lesser, criteria in addition to those identified above including: (iv) a common language, not necessarily peculiar to the group, (v) a common literature peculiar to the group, (vi) a common religion different from that of neighbouring groups or from the general community surrounding it, and (vii) being a minority or being an oppressed dominant group within a larger community. The example they gave for the latter was "a conquered people (say, the inhabitants of England shortly after the Norman conquest) and their conquerors might both be ethnic groups". See *Mandla v. Dowell Lee* House of Lords Transcript available at:

[http://www.hrcr.org/safrica/equality/Mandla\\_DowellLee.htm](http://www.hrcr.org/safrica/equality/Mandla_DowellLee.htm)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



*v. Gillette Industries Ltd*, (1980)<sup>16</sup>, whilst compounding an anomaly by making reference to Christians.

At this time, the adjudication led *The Liverpool Law Review* (1983: 83) to conclude that “a major consequence of the judgment is the protection which will be afforded to other groups. For example, Muslims will be a racial group for the purposes of the Act.” That this prediction did not materialise soon after, nor in the twenty four years since, points to a number of factors in the conception of racial discrimination that require greater exploration than Lee’s (1997: 6) conclusion that “the prospect of protecting Muslims was simply an extension too far for many liberal commentators and judges.”

### 2.3. Rules of Extension: RRA, POA, CDA and ‘racial Islamophobia’.

In its scope, the RRA definitional criteria was conceived to cover both ethnic and racial groupings. As we have seen, the application of RRA criteria in legal judgments has succeeded in affording Sikh and Jewish minorities these protections without extending them to other religious minorities. This is not an outcome of benign neglect, however, but has involved an active denial to legislative recourse. As Modood (2005c: 215) summarises:

Legal Judgements have included Sikhs, Jews, Gypsies, Rastafarians and others within the term [of ethnic group], but *Nyazi v. Rymans Ltd* (1988) specifically excluded Muslims. In 1991, the Appeal Court, by majority decision, overruled the recognition of Rastafarians as an ethnic group, and *CRE v. Precision* (1991) made it clear that direct discrimination against Muslims (as opposed to, say, Pakistanis) is not unlawful.

The decisive rationale common to each of these rulings is that since Islam hosts a diversity of racial and ethnic differences, being Muslim does not sufficiently meet the criteria of an ethnic or racial grouping. For example, in the case of *Nyazi v. Rymans Ltd* (1988) [EAT 10 May, 1988 unreported] the industrial tribunal settled in favour of the employer after it held that

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<sup>16</sup> Where an industrial tribunal held that discrimination against a Jewish employee *could* be addressed through the RRA if it was based *not* upon the complainant’s religion but on their perceived Jewish ethnic origin (see Dobe and Chokkor, 2000: 380). Although the applicant lost his case against his employers on this occasion, the Employment Tribunal held that they had been correct to hear the case because the alleged anti-Semitic remark was deemed to constitute racial discrimination within the remit of the RRA, since ‘Jewish’ was taken to denote being a member of a racial or ethnic category *as well as* being a member of a faith group. See ‘Direct Discrimination Case Studies’ available at: [http://www.cre.gov.uk/legal/direct/case\\_009seide.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/legal/direct/case_009seide.html)

“Muslims include people of many nations and colours, who speak many languages and whose only common denominator is religion and religious culture” (quoted in Dobe and Chhokar, 2000: 382). Thus the comments of Lord Fraser on the ability of an individual to adhere to a rule contravening the customs and cultural conditions of their ethnic or racial group do not apply, and the sorts of ideas of ethnic and racial groupings discussed earlier, including those premised upon cultural attributes of conscious value, or attributed racial identity, are also ignored. At a time when Muslims are subject to intense public focus, this type of conclusion, stressing the ethnic-origin heterogeneity of British Muslim constituencies, as a pre-cursor to disqualifying their inclusion from the scope for legal redress under the RRA, arguably demonstrates one of the ways in which “the Mandla formulation is out of date and serves to subvert the original purpose of the Race Relations Act” (ibid. 373). This can be detected in the manner through which the definition of ethnic or racial groups in this civil anti-discrimination legislation has also been adopted in criminal law, through the Public Order Act (POA) (1986), which introduces the criminal offence of ‘inciting racial hatred’.<sup>17</sup> As Dobe notes (2000: 1-2)

Legal acceptance as an ‘ethnic group’ is crucial if members of minority groups are to be protected from the crudest manifestations of racial prejudice. Indeed neither the Race Relations Act (1976) nor the Public Order Act (1986) can be invoked to prevent discrimination or hate speech directed specifically at Muslims. [...] The irony is two-fold in that not only is a large proportion of the ‘black’ community conferred limited protection by statutes whose express purpose was to provide protection for them, but also that they are denied this protection when a crucial part of their identity is the basis of the discrimination (or, as the case may be, incitement).

This situation is compounded by further criminal legislation which implements the same definition in the prevention of aggravated offences of harassment, violence and criminal damage, guided by racial hatred in the Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) (1998). This means that

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<sup>17</sup> Section 18 of the Public Order Act 1986 makes it an offence to use threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour with the intention of stirring up racial hatred. This was not introduced to protect minorities per se. but to maintain public order to the extent that the offence of incitement to racial hatred “should continue to be based on considerations of Public Order” (Review of Public Order Law, Cmnd 9510/1985, para.65; see Wolfe, 1987).



...whilst racial groups are protected, including South Asians, an iniquitous anomaly in the law established a hierarchy of protected faith communities. Mono-ethnic faith communities benefit from protection against discrimination, aggravated offences of harassment, violence and criminal damage, and against incitement to hatred... [and] the imposition of a positive duty on public authorities to promote equality. Multi-ethnic faith communities, like Muslims, benefit from neither protection nor equality provision. Unless it could be shown that discrimination was racial (on the grounds of colour, for example), or that it was because they were 'Bangladeshi', rather than 'Muslim', some forms of racism began to seem legitimised if not entirely legal (Allen, 2005: 53).

Although Allen's reading risks mischaracterising faith communities, since neither Sikh nor Jewish religious minorities are 'mono-ethnic'<sup>18</sup>, the inadequacy of the ways in which ethnic and racial groupings are conceived in the British legal context, including the ways in which racism is understood and legislation formulated to prevent and off-set, is increasingly apparent. According to several interviewees, some of these ambiguities can be explained via the interpretation of key judgments with respect to how current precedents might be related or extended to others. Notice, for example, the passing reference to Christians and Jews in terms of who would and would not conceivably be protected according to Lord Fraser. This leads Barbara Cohen, current chair of the Discrimination Law Association (DLA) and former head of CRE legal policy, to argue that, whilst she finds the terms qualifying Sikhs as an ethnic or racial group convincing, those achieved in relation to Jews are less so

I understand how and why we consider Sikhs as an ethnic group through Lord Fraser's extended judgement which set out a definition of "ethnic group" that has then been applied in various other cases... but I'm less convinced regarding the precedent established in the *Seide v. Gillette* where the court found that Jews are an ethnic group... the decision was never tested in the higher courts nor have any later cases sought to re-open this question. (Interview, 7 March 2006).

Part of the reason Cohen remains unconvinced is due to her subscription to the view that a certain degree of homogeneity is required amongst groups in terms of their make-up vis-à-vis coverage afforded under the RRA. In contrast to Arzu Merali and the IHRC, who have "been calling for a recognition of the fact that there is such a thing as racial *and* religious

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<sup>18</sup> For example, Jewish minorities in Britain can incorporate Ashkenazi Jews from Poland, Berber Jews from Algeria and African Jews from Ethiopia - all of whom may have different languages, customs and cultures. It is also feasible that Sikhs, through conversion, could incorporate different ethnic groupings. The importance of recognising this is not to rehearse an anti-essentialist argument, but to argue that - like Muslims in Britain - Jewish and Sikh minorities can be ethnically diverse and yet - unlike their Muslim counterparts - be considered an ethnic and racial minority in terms of the legislative redress available to them under the RRA.

discrimination according to the religious category by which people identify themselves and are identified against” (Interview, 12 June 2005), Cohen’s comprehension proceeds through a hard separation of race and religion

I do not believe there is one homogenous Jewish community in this country. The position of Muslims or Roman Catholics is that they are world religions and in the UK there are Muslims – or Roman Catholics – of many different ethnicities, and I think it would be more difficult for Muslims to bring themselves within the definition of an ethnic group as laid down in the Mandla case. So I’m saying that it’s not necessarily logical to expect an almost routine extension in the application of a law protecting people against race discrimination to all religious groups (Cohen, Interview).

Opting for a more contextual and historically nuanced reading, the current head of CRE legal policy, Razia Karim, contends that these past precedents only really make sense when viewed in their historical function as the only legal instruments that were available to post-immigrant minorities seeking redress for discrimination

[P]eople who felt that they had been discriminated against, and they believed it was on the grounds of their religion, had to use other laws to seek protection. The only one that was really available to minorities was the RRA, but to bring your complaint within the RRA you had to argue that the discrimination was on the grounds of race... but really if you read the those cases, what the judges are concerned with is identifying an ethnic group. [...] That Muslims didn’t have a cultural tradition of their own, which included family, social customs and manners etc because it’s a much wider group and people come from different parts of the world and bring into their religion *different* customs and manners, even though the over-riding one was an Islamic one (Razia Karim, Interview, 18 May 2006).

So in Karim’s analysis the issue is very much one of a religious minority being discriminated against on the grounds of their ethnicity as opposed their religion, and “those cases where...groups have tried to argue for discrimination on the grounds of religion which took place on the grounds ethnicity” (ibid).

In contrast both to Karim and Cohen’s position, Lord Lester (one of the architects of each of the bills that led to the 1965, 1968 and 1976 RRAs) maintains that there *is* enough scope within current Race Relations legislation to cover both ethnic and religious minorities *provided* that the discrimination faced by each group takes a racial form. This is a key point because, in Lester’s view, the same coverage afforded to Jews *is* available to Muslims if the



target group have a shared ethnicity - real or perceived – as appears to be the case with what he understands as ‘racial Islamophobia’

It has been clearly established for a quarter of a century, since the decision of Mr Justice Slynn, in 1980 as President of the Employment Appeal Tribunal in 1980 in the case of *Seide v Gillette Industries*, that Jews are included within the Race Relations Act only as victims of racial, and not religious discrimination. [...] Jews are protected under the Race Relations Act not because they have a shared religion but because of their shared ethnicity, whether real or perceived by anti-Semitic discriminators. Exactly the same protection applies to Muslims...who are protected if they have an ethnic identity as well as a religious one; for example, because of their colour or national origins. The typical anti-Semite who persecutes Jews does not usually do so because of their religion but because of what he regards as their tainted ancestry and their blood. [...] It is racial anti-Semitism...that is made unlawful under the Race Relations Act, just as racial Islamophobia is covered (Lord Lester, 9 November 2005).

According to Lester then, the way in which the RRA was conceived can afford redress to discrimination suffered by Muslims, irregardless of the reality of group heterogeneity, because it is the *perception* (as Lord Fraser ruled with respect to the popular use of race) of homogeneity that the discriminator proceeds from. The key issue, then, is Lester’s insistence that religious - as well as ethnic - minorities can be subject to ‘racial’ discrimination:

The true position may be summed up in this way. There is religious anti-Semitism and there is racial anti-Semitism. Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, anti-Semitism was primarily religious in nature, based on Christian or Islamic interpretations of Judaism. That form of prejudice and discrimination is directed at the religion itself and usually does not affect those of Jewish ancestry who have converted to another religion. That form of anti-Semitism is covered in the religious discrimination provisions in this Bill [Incitement to religious hatred Bill], just as religious Islamophobia is covered. (ibid.).

Despite the controversial charge of doctrinal anti-Semitism against Islam, given the strong evidence suggesting that anti-Semitic discourses have only very recently been imported into the Islamic vernacular – from Europe - in the post-War era of conflict over Palestine and Israel (Armstrong, 2003; Sayyid, 2002; Halliday, 1999), Lester’s delineation does provide another conception of where doctrinal religious discrimination *ends* and racial religious discrimination *begins*. This distinction was considered in chapter three with respect to Fred Halliday’s (1999) critique of the idea of Islamophobia, where it was argued that many British Muslims recount heightened discrimination and abuse when they appear ‘conspicuously

Muslim'.<sup>19</sup> The increase in personal abuse and everyday racism since 9/11 and 7/7, in which the perceived 'Islamic-ness' of the victims is the central reason for abuse<sup>20</sup>, regardless of the veracity of this presumption (resulting in Sikhs and others with an 'Arab' appearance being attacked for 'looking like bin Laden'), suggests that racial and doctrinal religious discrimination are much more interlinked than both Lester and the current application of civil RRA and criminal legislation recognise. It is understandable, then, that the fact that the Regulations do not provide protection equivalent to that which Sikhs and Jews can enjoy under the RRA remains a matter of considerable dissatisfaction amongst Muslims. This dissatisfaction arises from the disparity that if a Muslim is attacked because they are wearing the hijab or walking from a mosque, wearing a beard, tunic or turban, for example, the higher penalties incurred by perpetrators of racial harassment under the CDA (1998) would not be conferred against such perpetrators of religious harassment. Similarly, this was a blind spot in the POA (1986), in which only incitement to *racial* hatred, denoting "hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to colour, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins" is covered (the definition of 'ethnicity' in section 17 remains as that established under the application of RRA legislation).

As discussed below, the illegality of the incitement of others to hate members of a group because of their religion remains highly ambiguous and must meet a disproportionately high threshold before prosecutions become an option. This has allowed the British National Party (BNP) to campaign at the last two general elections (and several local elections) on what the party described as 'the Muslim problem'. Similarly, when the London Borough of Merton asked the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to prosecute those engaged in anti-Muslim incitement - following the distribution of offensive and threatening material by a BNP member - they were refused on the grounds that Muslims were not a racial group and therefore not covered by the POA (1986). This is despite, the same BNP member pleading guilty to distributing similar material inciting racial hatred against Jewish inhabitants of

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<sup>19</sup> As testimonies to the 2004 Runnymede follow-up report bear witness.

<sup>20</sup> See the IRR record of 'Backlash' against Muslims since 7 July 2005. [www.irr.org.co.uk](http://www.irr.org.co.uk).



Merton (cf *R v DPP ex parte London Borough of Merton* [CO/1319/1998]). Indeed, the CRE has recounted how it failed to persuade the West Yorkshire CPS to prosecute the BNP for distributing a leaflet headed 'Islam: Intolerance, Slaughter, Looting, Arson, Molestation of women' in an area with existing community tensions (Qureshi, 2005).

According to Dobe and Chhokar (2000: 373), instances such as these "undermine even the limited rationale underlying the Public Order Act (1986) [to prevent the outbreak of social disorder]. In areas of high Muslim concentration, where literature inciting hatred against Muslims is distributed, there is a substantial risk not only of an increase in crime motivated by the hatred of Muslims, but also of general violence and disorder".<sup>21</sup> This criticism is then in agreement with Lester's line of reasoning, and was to an extent witnessed in the summer of 2001 when several Northern English cities were subject to civil unrest and rioting. According to Allen (2003), each of these events incorporated a response to perceived incursions by Far Right organisations into predominantly Muslim communities.

It is interesting to learn that CRE practitioners concede this, however, and share the view that there is enough scope under current coverage to protect racialised religious minorities. The following comment from Razia Karim addresses this very issue and so is worth quoting at length:

I've raised this with the CPS in some particular areas before, including one where they were presented with a BNP leaflet. We referred it to the CPS and said that it was being distributed in an area with a high number of Pakistani residents who found it intimidating, abusive, threatening and insulting and we think you should prosecute. They were adamant they couldn't because it was directed against Muslims who are not covered by incitement to racial hatred. We argued that you can take the view that if it is circulated or distributed in an area with a concentration of a racial group – then you have to view it as an incitement to hatred of a racial group. [T]here is an example in Glasgow where a BNP activist had sent out material that was anti-Muslim but circulated it in an area with a sizable Pakistani population and there were prosecutions there. Even though on the face of it the leaflet was directed against a religion, they were actually stirring up hatred against a racial group. But this is where we come to the practise of what police and CPS officers do or don't understand, and this particular CPS region were adamant that they could not and would not prosecute. I think it could have been done under

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<sup>21</sup> Following the Danish Cartoon Affair discussed in chapter six, the BNP boasted that it had distributed over half a million leaflets displaying the inflammatory images of the Prophet Mohammed. In a message on the BNP website, its leader, Nick Griffin, urged members to print off the leaflets and "pin them to church notice boards" and to "leave them on trains and buses" to protest at the decision by British newspapers not to publish the images (quoted in McVeigh, 2006).

the incitement to racial hatred provisions, but there was reluctance amongst the decision makers to do that (Karim, Interview).

This supports the argument made earlier in chapter three, that what is required here is a more contextual account of racism *per se*, its interaction with cultural difference, and the relationship between cultural racism and Islamophobia in fuelling an incitement to religious hatred. In further support of this claim, the summary report on Islamophobia published by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia shortly after 9/11 indicated a rise in “physical and verbal threats being made, particularly to those visually identifiable as Muslims, in particular women wearing the hijab” (Allen and Nielsen, 2002: 16). Despite variations in the number and correlation of physical and verbal threats directed at Muslim population among the individual nation-states, one overarching feature among the fifteen European Union nation-states that emerged was the tendency for Muslim women to be attacked because the *hijab* signified a Muslim identity (ibid. 35).<sup>22</sup> If we reject a normative grammar of race and accept that legal categories of race and ethnicity should not foreclose deviations arrived at from social contingencies, including periods of Muslim racialisation, a coherent argument can be made for Muslim inclusion under coverage established by RRA legislation. This argument for inclusion could in fact follow that set out by Lord Simon of Glaisdale in his ruling that

...‘racial’ is not a term of art either legal or scientific... This is rubbery and elusive language – understandably when the draughtsman is dealing with so imprecise a concept as race in its popular sense and endeavouring to leave no loophole for evasion.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Several recent cases illustrate this further. For example, on 23 August 2007 a man attempted to run a Muslim woman over with his car while she waited at a bus stop in Southampton. The woman was wearing traditional Islamic dress and a head covering, and reported that the man drove up next to her and verbally abused her with anti-Muslim comments, before mounting the kerb and driving after her (see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/england/hampshire/6972201.stm>). Also during August, a Welsh Muslim woman was assaulted by a group of people who pulled her *hijab* from her head as she walked along the street with a pushchair (see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/wales/6970761.stm>). One of the most horrific examples includes how a London imam was subjected to a brutal assault and left in a critical condition requiring emergency surgery to both of his eyes, after two white assailants attacked him on his way to the mosque (see ‘Imam attacked as anti-Muslim violence grows’, *Independent*, 14 August 2007). See also footnote 26 of chapter 3 which reports that there were 200 Islamophobic incidents in the first two weeks following the London bombings. These included sixty five incidents of violent physical attacks and criminal damage, and one fatal stabbing where the victim was accosted by attackers shouting ‘Taliban’ (IHRC press release, 25 July, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> London Borough Council *ex parte* Zesko v. Race Relations Board (1972) [AC 342].



If social contingencies are acknowledged, it becomes possible to apply the Mandla formula to Muslims not only on the grounds of racial criteria, but also with respect to ethnic criteria according to the definitions discussed in chapter three, not least in thinking about the sorts of group boundaries premised upon cultural attributes of conscious value.

### **3. Religious aggravation or incitement to religious hatred?**

Partly responding to some of these concerns, and reports of increased anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia, the government introduced legislative provisions under Part 5 of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) (2001) which criminalised religiously aggravated offences. Section 39 of this Act amends part 2 of the CDA (1998) by incorporating religion into its offences covered by sections 28 to 32. This means that, in theory, the provisions of the CDA that cover assaults, criminal damage, public order offences and harassment, now also cover “racially or religiously aggravated” offences. As a result, if an offence is motivated (wholly or partly) by racial or religious hostility towards members of a racial or religious group based on their membership of that group, the offender may face increased fines and/or sentence enhancement.

Since December 2001 there have been at least eighteen prosecutions in England and Wales for religiously aggravated offences, eight of which resulted in convictions, with six amounting to public order offences. One such case was that of *Mark Norwood v. DPP* (2003) [EWHC 1564], in which the high court upheld the conviction of a religiously aggravated offence committed by a member of the BNP in Gobowem, Shropshire, who displayed a poster depicting the devastation of the World Trade Centre in New York under the words: “Islam out of Britain... protect the British people”. In his ruling against the plaintiff’s defence that the poster was not motivated by hostility toward Muslims as a group but, rather, toward Islam as a religion, Lord Justice Auld ruled

The poster was a public expression of attack on all Muslims in this country, urging all who might read it that followers of the Islamic religion here should be removed and warning that their presence here was a threat or danger to the British people. In my view, it could not, on any reasonable basis be dismissed as merely an intemperate criticism or protest against the tenets of the Muslim religion, as distinct

from an unpleasant attack on its followers generally (quoted in Ahdar and Leigh, 2005: 381).

Although this ruling cut away some of the rationale behind supporting the introduction of new generic legislation outlawing the incitement to religious hatred, it remains the case that such legislation was still desirable to many Muslims because of its potential to bring the protections afforded to all religious minorities into some sort of parity. Clause 38 of the aforementioned ATCS Bill, amended Part 3 of the POA to extend the existing provisions on incitement to racial hatred to cover incitement to religious hatred as well. It proposed to make an offence of using words, behaviour, or displaying written material deemed 'threatening', 'abusive' or 'insulting' with the intention or likely effect that hatred would be stirred up against a group of people targeted because of their religious beliefs or lack of religious beliefs. It was thus argued that the incitement to stir up hatred would have to be aimed at people and not ideologies, and that just as race is not defined in the remit of race-relations legislations (but rather through precedent and case law), neither would be religion in the incitement legislation.

Following a coalition forged by opposition parties in the House of Commons and House of Lords, however, with much public support from campaigners (including people who feared an embargo on telling religious jokes), the government was forced to amend the legislation to criminalise only 'threatening' behaviour and not that deemed 'abusive and insulting'. It also meant that people could only be prosecuted if it was demonstrated that they intended to stir up hatred - not if they were 'reckless'. So that whilst the original proposals would have applied to a situation where the defendant did not actually intend to stir up religious hatred, the changes meant that the offence would only apply if the prosecution could establish sufficient grounds for premeditation.

The strong opposition that ensued throughout each incarnation of the Bill included coalitions of satirists and liberals, conservatives and Christians, most notably the comedian Rowan Atkinson, Liberal Peer Lord Anthony Lester (an architect of the RRA), senior Barrister David Pannick QC, the Conservative Party front bench, and former Archbishop of



Canterbury, Lord Carey. This unique convergence did not escape the notice of the liberal activist Joan Smith (2007), who commented: “for once I find myself on the same side as the right-wing columnist Melanie Phillips and Don Horrocks of the Evangelical Alliance!”

As chapter six (sec. 2-3) highlights, one of the most striking features in the political discourse throughout the discussion of this legislation was a dissonance between some Muslim organisations, who argued that the recourse to law was necessary at a time of increased prejudice, intimidation and incitement of hatred, and the mainstream media which presented it as an example of Muslim incompatibility vis-à-vis British culture and tradition. Contrary to viewing it as an attempt to incorporate a confident Muslim-consciousness into the public sphere, it was argued that Muslims were seeking to put their beliefs beyond scrutiny.

That there was such little attempt by anti-discrimination liberals with impeccable credentials, particularly Lord Lester, to understand the lived experiences of Muslims, has continued to inform the view that the discrimination faced by Muslim groups is less urgent or important than that faced by other groups. In the words of Iqbal Sacranie, then Secretary General of the MCB

The aim was to provide a level playing field so that the protections that applied to race would be extended to religion; for example, criminalising reckless, abusive and insulting behaviour directed at an individual because of their faith. It would have given Muslims the same protection afforded to Sikhs and Jews in the UK (Sacranie, 4 June, 2006).

Such was the depth of hostility to proposed legislation<sup>24</sup>, specifically because it was feared that such legislation would place Islam beyond the point of scrutiny, that the bar was significantly raised. As chapter six (sec 4) details, the opposition to the legislation was also informed by a general suspicion of ‘fundamentalism’, ‘radicalism’ and ‘extremism’ amongst Muslim communities and, specifically, the fear that such legislation would buttress or further encourage these inclinations.

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<sup>24</sup> First tied to the ACSA (2001) and subsequently dropped, then attached and withdrawn from the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill (2004-5) to speed its passage prior to the last general election (see Meer, 2008). Each attempt to create this new offence sought to modify the previously mentioned Incitement to Racial Hatred found in Part 111 of The Public Order Act 1986. This offence is based upon that previously adopted in Northern Ireland in the The Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 PART 111 which has outlawed incitement to Religious Hatred for some years.

At the same time, it is important to note that this proposed legislation was not universally supported by all Muslim bodies, as Arzu Merali of the IHRC makes clear

We are kind of nervous about cutting down on free speech; whilst we do have a strong position which accepts that there has to be curbs on hate speech, we were reluctant to support this legislation because it arrived in the context of a security agenda, which itself was very, very problematic....[inaudible]. Secondly, we also looked at the experience of what happened when they introduced incitement to racial hatred and it was primarily, and has until today, been used disproportionately against black activists. We were not supremely confident that, with or without the current climate, anything better would happen with the incitement to religious hatred. We were very sceptical of the improvements available with that particular piece of legislation (Merali, Interview).

The Muslim Parliament, led by Dr Ghayasuddin Siddiqui, similarly argued that

Freedom of speech and liberty may be inconvenient at times but are values we must all uphold. The Labour Party is cynically seeking to placate Muslims by promoting fudge legislation in Parliament, which they know will not get passed. [T]he campaign led by a section of the Muslim community for a new law on incitement to religious hatred, amidst an atmosphere of heightened expectation is unwarranted (Press Release, 7 March 2005).

Both share with Barbara Cohen, commentating in her capacity as chair of the Discrimination Law Association (DLA) as well as the former head of CRE legal policy, a view that the proposed legislation was a ‘cynical’ attempt to mollify Muslims aggrieved at the war in Iraq; not least the MCB who had been lobbying for such legislation, the introduction of which was designed

...to keep the MCB happy and to keep them supporting New Labour! It was initially offered like the jam on top of some very intrusive legislation: the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, which could be seen as likely to target Muslims; this part of that bill was subsequently dropped because of the opposition to the substance of that bill. The government then quite cynically put it in its election manifesto to win the Muslim vote, and to some extent this worked. (Cohen, Interview).<sup>25</sup>

Recognising the political context in which it was introduced, however, does not undermine the original argument in favour of – nor the continuing requirement and legitimacy of - this legislation. Indeed, and although Cohen thinks that “the Lords were right to send it back with the proposed amendments”, she recognises the remaining discrepancy in the level of protection and scope for redress that continues to inform the Muslim complaints of inequality

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<sup>25</sup> This is also a salient view expressed in the public and media discourse examined in the next chapter.



...the key thing with the law as it stands is that it doesn't cover subjectively defined 'insulting and abusive' experiences but 'threatening' behaviour. Obviously this will mean a discrepancy between inciting religious hatred and inciting racial hatred. [...] The Discrimination Law Association had a long internal debate on what our position should be; in the end we adopted a 4-pronged approach: firstly that the government was perhaps the body most responsible for stirring up hostility towards Muslims; secondly that most of the examples of 'inciting hatred' that have been used in the debates involved matters that could and should be dealt with under the existing criminal law – so the fault lies with the police and their lack of response creates lack of confidence by the Muslim community to report incidents; thirdly, any legislation that might inhibit freedom of speech should be carefully scrutinised; and fourthly that the law should provide equivalent protection for all religious groups (ibid.).

The second of her four issues, that concerning the lack of political and judicial will to prosecute anti-Muslim racial discrimination, return us to Lester's argument concerning the applicability of current legislation, and proves crucial when trying to understand why established anti-discrimination legislation has never been extended to protect Muslims. Razia Karim rests this firmly at the door of criminal justice agencies

[W]e would bring complaints to the CPS or the Police and they would say. 'look, we can't do anything about this because there is no protection from religious hatred'. So every time you got a complaint about an advert, a BNP poster or leafleting, the police would say, 'sorry, we can't do anything'. So we saw a gap in the protections. Whereas Sikh and Jewish people could draw on protections because they're an ethnic group and can draw on incitement provisions. [...] I think we're happy that we've got something on the statute book [but] I actually think that our concerns are even bigger practical ones, which is that even with the incitement to racial hatred provisions, we've seen them be *under* used. They really are not used very often or frequently to protect people from racial hatred.

Although the Norwood finding is a good indication that the judiciary is not wholly ignoring anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia, this does not off-set the desire for much broader anti-religious discrimination legislation that is comparable to the broad range of protections afforded under existing RRA legislation, including the imposition of a statutory duty. An objection thus arises when institutions make space for, and promote a positive duty to recognise, some religious practices and this is not made equally available to other faiths (see footnotes 10 and 30 of this chapter). When allied, for example, with instances of lesser recognition being afforded to Muslim employees to take time off from work for religious festivals, then institutional Islamophobia becomes a legitimate charge, where the grounds for refusal are based upon an objection to making allowances for Islam in particular. Continuing



with this example of employment legislation, it is possible to identify an interface between the genuine improvements and their limitations in terms of resolving some of the tensions outlined above. The following section elaborates this point through a discussion of the ways in which recent legislation has been adopted.

#### 4. Article 13 and the Treaty of Amsterdam

It has been established that UK legislation prohibits discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, enacts a higher sentencing tariff for racist violence and prohibits the incitement of racial hatred. Across the European Union,<sup>26</sup> however, there has been no consistent level of protection against racial discrimination and, like the UK, little legislation that consistently protects people from discrimination that takes place on grounds of religion, disability, age or sexual orientation.<sup>27</sup> In recognition of this, and following proposals set out in November 1999, the European Commission proposed the following, under Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, in December 2003

Without prejudice to the other provisions of this Treaty and within the limits of the powers conferred by it upon the Community, the Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (Office Journal of European Communities C325/33 pp: 11 and Council Directive 2000/78/EC)).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> EU [27] Enlargement includes the EU9 who were the European Community in 1980 (France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Luxemburg, UK, Denmark and Ireland), plus the EU15 who were the European Union in 2003 (EU9 plus Spain, Portugal, Greece, Sweden, Finland and Austria), and the EU25 which is the European Union in 2004 (EU15 plus the A10) and now the EU27 which amounts to the European Union after Bulgarian and Romanian accession; A10 – the ten countries that joined the EU in May 2004 (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Malta, Cyprus, Slovakia and Slovenia); A8: The eight Central and Eastern European countries of the A10 (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia and Slovenia); A2: Bulgaria and Romania, who joined in January, 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Sex discrimination is covered by existing European Union legislation under Article 141 EC (Ex. Art. 119 EEC). See also Equal Pay Directive Dir. 75/117 EEC; Equal Treatment Directive 1976 Dir. 76/207 EEC; and Equal Treatment in Social Security Directive 79/7 EEC; Burden of Proof Directive 1997 Dir. 97/80/EC.

<sup>28</sup> Cohen provides an interesting contextual insight when she recounts that “the Race Directive was approved in Europe very quickly – this was when Haider had been elected in Austria and there were too many racist incidents across Europe so no Member State would want to be seen to be voting against an anti-racism measure. For the next directive there was much more politicking going on. The Catholic Church used its influence so protection for religious organisations is particularly good. The conflicts between the grounds covered by the Framework Employment Directive are now coming out - especially conflicts between religion or belief and sexual orientation. If it were not for the EU Directives I do not think we would have legislation on religious discrimination or sexual orientation



On this basis, three broad directives were issued to member states. The first established a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (*the Employment Directive*), which would require member states to make discrimination unlawful on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in the areas of employment and training. The second directive implemented the principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (*the Race Directive*). Like the Employment Directive, the Race Directive requires member states to make discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin unlawful in employment and training. Unlike the employment directive, it goes further in requiring member states to provide protection against discrimination *in non-employment areas*, such as education, access to social welfare, and the provision of goods and services. The final directive, meanwhile, sought to establish an 'Action Programme', with an allocated budget of one hundred million euros over six years, to fund 'practical' action by member states in promoting equality in all the areas covered by the two directives; effectively mirroring the RRA approach to pursuing proactive initiatives in combating discrimination in member states.<sup>29</sup> Key objectives include a promotion of 'transnational co-operation' between organisations in member states, as well as encouragement to tackle discrimination throughout the European Union, and to 'exchange' ideas and information.

#### 4.1. Implications and relevancy

In a similar manner to the way in which the RRA operates, the scope of the *Employment Directive* is not limited to an employee's actual religion or belief, it is simply that they are treated less favourably *on the grounds of* religion or belief. Hence, "the discriminator's perception (whether accurate or erroneous) of the religion or belief of the person discriminated against will therefore suffice" (Ahdar and Leigh, 2005: 305). Since the directives are concerned with laying down broad objectives to ensure that discrimination is

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discrimination and very definitely would not be expecting legislation on age discrimination" (Interview).

<sup>29</sup> The Action Programme is administered by the EC, assisted by an advisory committee made up of representatives from all the member states.

prohibited and that victims are entitled to a minimum level of redress, they do not prohibit the introduction of greater degrees of protection, and where higher levels of protection already exist, member states will be required to uphold these. In theory, then, anybody working or simply travelling within the European Union will enjoy the same minimum level of protection from discrimination in all the member states.<sup>30</sup>

This legislation has already been tested in the UK with the case of *Khan v. NIC Hygiene Ltd*, (2005) [ET 1803250/04]. The details of the case are that, having worked for the company for nine years, Mr. Mohammed Khan used his annual 25-day holiday entitlement and another week's unpaid leave to make a pilgrimage to Mecca to perform the *Hajj*. It later transpired that although he had requested the leave in good time, he received no response from his employer and was advised by his trade union (TGWU) that if he had heard nothing he could assume his request for leave would be granted. Upon his return, however, he was suspended without pay and later had his contract terminated. Subsequently, he took his complaint to a Leeds employment tribunal which, in January 2005, ruled that he had been unfairly dismissed in contravention of the newly introduced regulations.

In another case of *Mohammed v Virgin Trains* (2005) [ET 2201814/04], Mr Mohammed claimed that he had been dismissed because he had refused to trim his beard shorter than the ten centimetres that he argued was required by his faith, and that his requests to wear a religious skullcap had repeatedly been refused. The employer argued that Mr Mohammed had been offered the job after agreeing to trim his beard to comply with the company's "neat and tidy" facial hair policy, and that he had been told that he could wear a skullcap if it was in the corporate colours. The employment tribunal found that there was no religious discrimination because his dismissal was purely based on poor performance.

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<sup>30</sup> It is worth noting, however, that some countries are proving better than others at incorporating these directives into national legislative frameworks (see Dhami, Squires and Modood, 2006). Indeed, there is evidence which could be interpreted as suggesting that some EU countries have been delaying their adoption through various judicial means. It is also worth noting that the directive does not prohibit discrimination on grounds of nationality, which is dealt with separately in the Treaty.



According to Huang and Kleiner (2001: 128), these examples are symptomatic of a much broader trend where “requests for religious accommodation in the workplace may well explode over the next decade”

In the 1960s and 1970s, blacks and women fought for their rights. In the 1980s and 1990s, it was gays and lesbians. Now it has turned into employers and employees and the battlefield is religion in the workplace. As a result, workers are suing employers for the freedom to express their religion (ibid).

The difficulty with this position is that such requests have been in evidence from Muslims in Britain since as far back as the 1970s. Typical of such examples is the case of *Ahmed v. ILEA* (1976) [1QB36CA], where it was deemed not unlawful to deny a Muslim teacher the time to observe prayers for an hour on Friday afternoons. Nevertheless, it may appear that Huang and Kleiner are correct in the sense that episodes of discrimination are rarely discussed in public and media discourse unless the facts of a case are especially newsworthy. As the next chapter discusses, these discourses are promoting a perception of religious exceptionalism (see also Meer, 2006; Meer and Noorani, forthcoming). This is particularly the case where the complainant is Muslim, an analysis supported by Cohen’s view that

There have been several hundred religious discrimination cases in employment tribunals, certainly not all brought by Muslims...Of those that I have read, most seem to be about matters like accommodation, when employees can be away from their jobs, rather than cases where religious prejudice is the issue. I think that Muslims will continue to be prominent because of the continuing anti-terrorism measures that fuels Islamophobia (Interview).

## 4.2. Limitations

The EC Race Directive mirrors the wording of UK RRA both in terms of the main principles of promoting equality of access and opportunity, and imposing a statutory duty of care. However, the Race Directive shares with the RRA the criterion of racial and ethnic groupings that exclude religious minorities (which may result from the assumption that religion would be covered by the parallel Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) regulations). This situation invites two main criticisms. The first criticism points to the limited scope of the legislation which, although encompassing the important arena of employment, will continue to deny Muslims in Britain broader legal protections in the areas



of social welfare, including health care, and public services, education and housing, amongst others. This is a point made by Arzu Merali when she notes:

...the application that is afforded in employment doesn't go across the board so again we're in that position again where some communities are covered from religious discrimination because they are accepted as racial minorities while others are not. And again, Muslims are out of that loop! (Interview).

This is of particular concern given the levels of disadvantage experienced by Muslim minorities in these very areas<sup>31</sup> (Abrams and Houston, 2006; Performance Innovation Unit (PIU), 2001; Modood et al 1997), and is further undermined by the fact that there is no legal aid available for people to bring their cases, which means that, "while you could claim the moral high ground if you like, you couldn't take it through the courts unless you had the appropriate resources which, on a practical side, we see day in day out because it's very hard to bring forward cases" (Merali, Interview). Crucially, this legislation does not stipulate regulatory or enforcement functions as in the case of RRA. Karim summarises both the reasons and the implications of these shortcomings:

We can't deal with these cases [of religious discrimination] because the Act that sets up the CRE doesn't allow us to. It was discussed at the time but rejected, fair to say probably by both parties, the CRE and the Home Office, that we wouldn't venture into religious discrimination cases. So there's no one place where a person can go to for advice if they felt they'd suffered religious discrimination. [...] There are very few advice agencies with the funding to represent people in front of the tribunals, if you are lucky enough to live in an area where you have such advice centres, you might get help there. Otherwise you would have to fund it privately and pay for your own lawyer, or do it yourself. The success of discrimination cases before a tribunal is very low already, and I think most people who are litigants in person fail. So on the face of it, we have the law and that's very welcome, but there are real problems with access to justice and enforcing those rights, and I think that remains a big issue for victims of discrimination on religious grounds (interview).

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<sup>31</sup> For example, Abrams and Houston (2006) and Modood et al (1997) found that Muslims have disproportionately lower incomes and higher rates of unemployment. They have comparatively lower skills both in education and in vocational training. They are more likely to reside in deprived housing situations and disproportionately suffer from bad health. The PIU (2001) report on ethnic minorities found that Muslims are generally more likely to say that they feel unsafe at night both in their homes and walking alone in their neighborhoods. In the context of social and economic conditions, more than half of all Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, who are a significant part of the Muslim community in Britain, live in the 10 percent of the most deprived wards in England and Scotland. Around one third of these Pakistanis and Bangladeshis live in properties that are deemed 'unfit' within the private sector. Around 30 percent live in the most deprived neighbourhoods.



### 4.3. Implementation

The second issue is the manner in which this legislation has been implemented, since the government initially adopted it via secondary legislation by transposing it onto existing legislative instruments, rather than introducing it through a new Parliamentary Act. According to Cohen, "...the government felt that after the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 they had spent enough time dealing with race and that their priorities and parliamentary schedules wouldn't allow for another race bill" (interview). A new Single Equalities Act<sup>32</sup> was advocated by the Forum of Action against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR) for the reasons that:

A single Equality Act would show the indivisibility of the principle of equality and encourage strong links between groups facing discrimination. It would place all grounds of discrimination on an equal footing, providing an equal level of protection to all groups that suffer discrimination. More importantly, the amalgamation would rid the area of anti-discrimination law from the confusion, complexities and inconsistencies that currently exist (FAIR, 2002: Section 4, Paragraph 20)

An implementation of the employment directive through new primary legislation would also, according to FAIR, have allowed "Muslims to participate in the public media and parliamentary debate on the issue [and] see that the main political institutions in this respect are taking their main political demands seriously" (FAIR, 2002: section 4: paragraph 97).

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<sup>32</sup> On 30 October 2003, the Government announced its intention to establish a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR). This announcement followed the consultation - *Equality and Diversity: Making It Happen* - which launched the most significant review of UK equality institutions in a generation. The Government then wrote a White Paper called *Fairness for All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights*. The enabling legislation, the Equality Bill, was considered by Parliament and introduced as The Equality Act (2006). It is a precursor to the promised Single Equality Act, the aim of which is to combine all UK equality enactments and to provide comparable protections across all equality strands. Those explicitly mentioned by the Equality Act (2006) include age; disability; gender; proposed; commenced or completed gender reassignment; race; religion or belief and sexual orientation. The Discrimination Law Review (DLR) was set up alongside an independent Equalities Review, chaired by Trevor Phillips, to look at the underlying societal and cultural causes of disadvantage and inequality. The Equalities Review published an interim report for consultation on 20 March 2006 and its final report, *Fairness and Freedom*, on 28 February 2007. So far, however, it remains the case that there is no proposed Religion Equality Duty, and because Muslims are excluded from coverage afforded by Race Relations legislation, the absence in protection means that public authorities in local communities where there are large numbers of Muslims are not required to take the needs of Muslim communities into account. According to Cohen, "[another] review of discrimination law is unlikely to happen again for a long while so we need to take the opportunity as a bare minimum to harmonise some quite disparate pieces of legislation. What many of us want is for new legislation to do much more than prevent discrimination. It should be working towards substantive equality. That isn't just about the "diversity" or stopping less favourable treatment but includes measures that will tackle historic disadvantage and longstanding inequalities" (Interview).



#### **4.4. Precedents, material scope and direct and indirect discrimination**

There are indeed precedents for the sort of approach required to establish a new single Equalities Act, which could harmonise anti-discrimination legislation and have an amalgamated body to monitor its implementation. For example, in the United States these two issues are addressed through the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EOEC) - a quasi-governmental agency responsible for investigating claims of racial, sexual and religious discrimination in the workplace – which monitors the application of the Workplace Religious Freedom Act (1970). Article VII of this Act requires that companies make ‘reasonable efforts’ to accommodate religious practices and beliefs. For example

Employers cannot schedule examinations or other selection activities in conflict with a current or prospective employee’s religious needs, inquire about an applicant’s future availability at certain times, maintain a restrictive dress code, or refuse to allow observance of a Sabbath or religious holiday, unless the employer can prove that not doing so would cause an undue hardship (Huang and Kleiner, 2001: 132)

This followed the case of *Katz v. Sears* which involved a dispute between an orthodox Jew, Kalman Katz, and the large chain retailer Sears Roebuck. The latter refused to employ the former as a repair technician, not because he did not meet the skills criteria stipulated by the application details, but because adherence to religious instruction forbade Mr. Katz from working Saturdays - the retailer’s busiest days for repair technicians. When Mr. Katz took his complaint to federal law court, Sears Roebuck was adjudged to be at fault in discriminating against the claimant because of his upholding of religious beliefs.<sup>33</sup>

#### **5. Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR)**

As a potential precursor to a single Equalities Act (see footnote 32), the government has created a new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR), which will have responsibility for promoting different UK equality strands and enforcing anti-discrimination laws on all grounds set out in Article 13. It will also promote (but not enforce) the narrow

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<sup>33</sup> Unlike the religious discrimination instruments in article 13, the US legislation was extended to some educational and other public institutions of local and federal government in 1972.



provisions of the Human Rights Act (HRA) and international human rights conventions such as the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Covering race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, religion and human rights, and with an annual budget of £57m, “the CEHR will be one of Europe’s largest human rights bodies” (Birt, 2006: 4). Although some of its structure and function remains undecided, and is unlikely to be operational before 2008, the current chair of the CRE, Trevor Phillips, has been appointed to head the new body.

As chapter one details, Phillips is an outspoken critic of multiculturalism and has already stated that Muslim faith schools pose a threat to the coherence of British society, and that British Muslims seeking to live according to principles of the *shari’a* should leave the country (Bowcott, 2007). According to one Muslim commentator this “propensity to rhetoric has arguably helped to isolate and stereotype Muslims rather...than understand, support and help them” (Birt, 2006: 4). What it also suggests is that the delivery of anti-discriminatory and equality policy on the basis of religion “is in the hands of someone who has such little sympathy or liking for Muslims.” (ibid). Whilst this may be a little strong, there certainly appears to be a dissonance between Phillips and Muslim communities on a number of key issues concerning the public recognition of Muslim identities. More generally, Merali raises concerns over the effectiveness of this new body with respect to carrying out race equality duties, and where Muslims once might have been able to fit into

[W]hat has traditionally been understood as the race-relations mandate seems to be regressing rather than being taken further, so that in itself is a hugely worrying development and we’re finding it quite difficult to see how that situation has come about, but I think it reflects the lack of willingness of government to engage with the grass roots, including Muslim organisations, with regards to discrimination on these topics (Merali, Interview).

Equally, and as a precursor to this charge, some Muslim organisations have already pointed to a loss of confidence in the CRE as it currently stands, specifically in terms of its commitment to tackling anti-Muslim discrimination. This complaint is situated in a general picture of CRE operational withdrawal described by Cohen and supported by Karim below. While the latter rationalises this withdrawal, in terms of a broader CRE strategy, the former laments the practice as politically motivated



The CRE itself seems to be disengaging from frontline community work and links.... The current mantra is 'integration not litigation' and in 2004 the CRE provided legal representation to only one case. No other individuals were represented by the CRE either in tribunals or civil proceedings! The not unsurprising result has been to dissuade applicants from pursuing their cases. It's absolutely ridiculous – there's no point in having good laws if the people the laws should benefit can't use them (Cohen, Interview).

The Muslim community may feel that we're not taking their cases and litigating on their behalf, but I think many other groups would feel the same because our litigating strategy had changed in that we were taking fewer cases and the cases are more strategic. [...] It's partly a general trend where we felt that after many years of doing high volume case work and litigation, there was a genuine need to move towards a strategy that would last across a sector or a group with one case rather than the 10 or 20 cases. (Karim, Interview).

The view amongst some Muslim organisations that the CRE has proven ineffectual is not easily explained away by stressing CRE operational imperatives. Indeed, there is evidence that Muslim bodies such as the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) are increasingly materially supporting cases where the claimant is not assisted by the CRE because the issue concerns anti-Muslim discrimination

I think the CRE has recently suffered a huge loss of credibility irregardless of the IHRC or other organisations taking any cases forward. I'm not against organisations being strategic but...the problem with the CRE is that they haven't highlighted anti-Muslim racism, and they're extremely hesitant and largely do not take on cases that directly discriminate against Muslims. Just speaking in a wider context, and therefore with colleagues in other organisations in the race-relations industry, some of the things that very senior members of the CRE have been saying about multiculturalism and so on itself has detracted from its legitimacy as an organisation. It's kind of positioned it very much in the government camp, again dictating from the top down on what it is to be a minority; what we can get and what we should expect and so on. Rather than actually looking at the experiences of what a community are and how to go about redressing that (Merali, Interview).

Merali's complaint perfectly captures the Muslim objection to how anti-discrimination legislation has both historically been conceived and how it currently operates to exclude Muslims, creating a hierarchy of protected identities in recognising the racism perpetrated against some religious minorities and not others.

## 6. Conclusions

This chapter has argued that Muslims in Britain are subject to a dissonance in not being beneficiaries of anti-discrimination legislation – as Muslims - whilst remaining full recipients



of its obligations. This impairs the sorts of civic status that Muslims enjoy and returns us to the Du Boisian characterisation set out in chapter two (sec 3.2a), which describes the way in which minorities feel alienated and disenfranchised because they are sidelined in the political structure of their society, remaining bound by the *requirements* but not experiencing the *rewards* of citizenship. It is argued that what is required is a principled operation of anti-discrimination legislation vis-à-vis Muslims which can distinguish between the right to religious freedom *and* the right to non-discrimination on the grounds of religion. For example, whilst the former is concerned with those who are committed to Islam as religious believers, the latter could be concerned with how discrimination against Muslims has the ability to pick out individuals on the basis of discernable characteristics, to assign individuals to a group, to give emphasis to those criteria that are used to stigmatize, and that reflect pejorative or negative assumptions based on the individual's membership of that group.

This chapter has argued that a more flexible approach should be adopted, one that draws upon factual evidence and gives weight to the self-perception of individuals and their communities about their own sources of identity. Such an approach might allow us to explore the social contingencies of a Muslim identity; its saliency and interaction with other sources of identity. Indeed, this chapter has shown how the efforts for Muslim inclusion perfectly illustrate the movement from a historically-ascribed identity to a politically self-defined identity that contests Muslim-specific discrimination and Islamophobia. This movement is complemented by evidence that Muslim bodies such as the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) are increasingly materially supporting cases where the claimant is not assisted by established bodies because the complaint concerns anti-Muslim discrimination. Another example of Muslim autonomy is explored in the final multi-method case studies which examines the relationship between Muslim-consciousness the mobilisations for Muslim schools.

## Chapter Six

### Muslim Schools in Britain: Muslim-consciousness in action?

I think we're at a very interesting stage. The metaphor I use is that the first Muslims that came here were like the farmer standing on the ground; they were standing on it but didn't have roots in it. But their seed has been scattered with some falling on good ground, others falling on stony ground and yet some being blown away in the wind. In some ways we're only now at the beginning of establishing a genuine Muslim presence in the United Kingdom and that presence is from the seed of the second and third generations.

Idreas Mears, Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) (Interview, 1 April 2006).

#### 1. Introduction

Earlier chapters have delineated the emergence of a heterogeneous Muslim identity and characterised it as a form of Muslim-consciousness. Reporting on the last of three case studies the present chapter examines the relationship between this Muslim-consciousness and mobilisations for Muslim schools. Indeed, there are now over one hundred independent and seven state funded Muslim schools in Britain, and their place within the British education system remains subject to intense debate (Parker-Jenkins *et al.*, 2005; Fetzer and Soper, 2003). This is arguably due to the frequency with which Muslim schools are cited in various deliberations concerning Muslim civic engagement, political incorporation and social integration. Whether they are frowned upon and viewed as an obstacle to social harmony (Dawkins, 2007; Grayling, 2006; Bell, 2005; NSS, 2004; HPG, 2001) or welcomed as a panacea or antidote to a prescriptive or coercive assimilation (Bunting, 2006; Ameli., *et al* 2005; AMSS, 2004; Hussain 2004; CBMI, 2004, 1997), Muslim schools have undoubtedly emerged as a highly salient issue that at times reinforces and at other times cuts across political and philosophical divides.

At the same time, and despite the proliferation of literature on Muslims in Britain that has multiplied as one seeming crisis has given way to another, very little research has consciously tried to investigate how an increasingly salient articulation of Muslim identity connects with the issue of Muslim schooling (as it equally might with other key arenas of British



citizenship, including protection from discrimination, an issue taken up in the following chapter). Thus, and despite sustained Muslim mobilisations for Muslim schools within and across diverse Muslim communities, surprisingly little is known of *how* these mobilisations are being undertaken, *what* is being sought, and, more generally, *why* Muslim schools are deemed to be an important issue for some Muslim communities.

It is argued that Muslim schools make an ideal case through which to examine the emergence and meaning of Muslim-consciousness within and amongst British-Muslim communities themselves, alongside the way that this is understood at an official level. In part, this is due to the significant interaction that is required between Muslim parents, Muslim educators, local education authorities (LEAs) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) throughout the creation, operation and monitoring of Muslim schools in the manner described below. By characterising the Muslim-consciousness discussed in the previous chapter as a kind of self-consciousness *for itself*, located squarely in the Du Boisian tradition set out in chapter two, the current chapter explores the relationship between this consciousness and Muslim mobilisations for faith schools. The chapter chiefly examines whether an incorporation and reflection of Muslim-consciousness in education can assist or prevent this Muslim-consciousness from turning inward, rather than striving outward, in potential synthesis, as a meaningful and reciprocal British-Muslim identity.

- **For these reasons, the first part of this chapter examines the relationship between governmental policy and identity articulations presently informing Muslim mobilisations, before contextualising these mobilisations within a historically peculiar British schooling context. The second part discusses some of the broader philosophical, political and sociological literature concerning how Muslim educators answer frequently made charges against Muslim schooling.**

Particular attention is afforded to the argument for autonomy, the role of civic assimilation in the remaking of British-Muslim constituencies, as well as Muslim curricula objectives and concerns over social cohesion. Each of these issues is explored through the adoption of an

integrated, multi-method case study analysis in the ways set out in the introduction to pursue the three-fold questions below

- Firstly, *why* have there been sustained Muslim mobilisations on the issue of Muslim schools within and across diverse Muslim communities?
- Secondly, *what* does the engagement or non-engagement of Muslims over the issue of education reveal about their incorporation into a rubric of British citizenship, specifically with respect to their civic status and participation?
- Thirdly, *how* can a recognition and reflection of the substantive elements of a Muslim-consciousness within the sphere of education attend to the sorts of double-consciousness discussed in chapter two?

## 2. The Policy Context

It is worth briefly setting out the public policy context with respect to Muslim schools here at the beginning, where a concise overview can be gained by turning our attention to a recent watershed in Muslim schooling, in order to facilitate more advanced discussion later in the chapter. This watershed was achieved in 1998 when, after eighteen years of a Conservative administration, Tony Blair's newly elected Labour government delivered on a promise in its election manifesto and co-opted two primary schools *Islamia School* (in Brent, London) and *Al-Furqan School* (in Birmingham) into the state sector by awarding them Voluntary Aided (VA) status, and with it an allocation of public money to cover teacher salaries and the running costs of the school. It arrived "fourteen years and five Secretaries of State after the first naive approach" (Hewitt, 1998: 22), when Muslim parents and educators had only begun to get to grips with the convoluted application process to achieve state funding, and were operating in the context of a Conservative government that was hostile to the idea of state funded Muslim schools.

Both the aforementioned *Islamia* and *Al-Furqun* schools had already undergone a strict inspection by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and had more than met the



appropriate governmental criteria required of independent schools applying for state funding. Alongside the obvious, such as the delivery of a good standard of education and the economic feasibility of a school, these criteria require (i) the adoption and delivery of the National Curriculum (ranging from a 'thinner' to 'thicker' adoption depending on whether the school is VA or Voluntary Controlled (VC) as discussed below); (ii) the appointment of appropriately qualified staff; (iii) the provision of suitable school buildings; (iv) equality of opportunity for both male and female pupils, and (v) consideration of parental demand.

All of this is of course premised upon the "need" for a school in a given area based upon the number of available pupil spaces. In the past, this has been cited as the principle reason for – having met all other criteria – refusing some Muslim schools to opt into the state system, whilst simultaneously inviting other religious schools in similar areas to do so (see AMSS, 2004: 20 and Parker-Jenkins 2002: 279). Nevertheless, the success of these two schools was given further impetus in the Government White Paper, *Schools: Achieving Success* (2001)<sup>1</sup>, so that nine years and another four Secretaries of State later the current number of state funded

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<sup>1</sup> This developed into a more reserved public commitment after the northern riots in the summer of 2001 were partly understood as an outcome of Muslim self-segregation (Cantle, 2001), and the discursive fall-out of 9/11 bled into public and media appraisal of all Muslim and Islamic education, often likening it to certain *Madrasses* found on the sub-continent where rote learning takes precedence over the cultivation of 'independent' thinking. For example, Labour MP Tony Wright, commenting on Muslim faith schooling, stated that "[b]efore September 11 it looked like a bad idea, it now looks like a mad idea" (BBC News, 22/11/2001 available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/1670704.stm>). By the time the initiative reached the legislature in the form of the Education Act 2002, however, it regained some of its' initial impetus. Hence Paragraphs 66-67 provide for the creation of new secondary schools, and set out the responsibilities of the LEAs and the procedures to be followed to this end. The summary booklet for the Bill states in paragraph 2.10 "We are also taking steps to encourage greater innovation in the creation of new schools. In particular, we will take steps to allow greater involvement of external partners in the provision of wholly new schools [Para 2.11 is about setting up city academies] 2.12 Innovation in the provision of new schools will also be extended much more widely. Where a new secondary school is required, the LEA will advertise, so that any interested party can put forward proposals for a new school. Any promoter, including a community or faith group, an LEA or another public, private or voluntary body can publish proposals. These will be judged on the basis of their educational merits, value for money and the outcome of consultation". Para 5.30 then sets out the Government position in its fullest, stating that: "Faith schools have a significant history as part of the state education system, and play an important role in its diversity. Over the last four years, we have increased the range of faith schools in the maintained sector, including the first Muslim, Sikh and Greek Orthodox schools. There are also many independent faith schools and we know that some faith groups are interested in extending their contribution to state education. We wish to welcome faith schools, with their distinctive ethos and character, into the maintained sector where there is clear local agreement. Guidance to School Organisation Committees will require them to give proposals from faith groups to establish schools the same consideration as those from others, including LEAs. Decisions to establish faith schools should take account of the interests of all sections of the community."



Muslim faith schools has risen to seven. In addition to those previously mentioned, this figure includes *Al-Hijrah* (a secondary school in Birmingham), *Feversham College* (a secondary school in Bradford), *Gatton Primary School* (in Wandsworth, South London), *Tauheedul Islam Girls High School* (Blackburn, Lancashire) and *The Avenue School* (another primary school in Brent, London).

Given the existence of over 4,700 state funded Church of England schools, over 2100 Catholic, 33 Jewish and 28 Methodist schools, Muslim campaigns for equality of access and opportunity in the faith schooling of Muslim children, in the state sector, is indicative of “a modern society which is widely perceived as increasingly secular but is paradoxically increasingly multi-faith” (Skinner, 2002: 172). If we consider how successfully the influential public policy document on British education, the Swann Report (1985), had shifted the mainstream agenda away from faith schooling in the state-sector as a realistic educational option for minority ethnic children, this ‘paradox’ is particularly interesting. Fearing that faith schooling for minority students would intensify their difficulties, the Swann Report concluded

...the establishment of ‘separate’ schools could well fail to tackle many of the underlying concerns of the communities and might also exacerbate the very feelings of rejection and not being accepted (Swann Report, 1985: 509).

These “underlying concerns” are discussed in the next section of this chapter, but it is worth noting that they include the complaint by Muslim parents and educators of being afforded an impaired citizenship in not receiving the same ratio of provisions available to other major faith groups. Such complaints suggest that any sense of rejection has only increased (see below and AMSS, 2004; Anwar and Bakhsh, 2003), and are accentuated when we review the current situation of the Church of England overseeing just over a quarter of all state schools, and the near impossibility of their being de-coupled from the Established Church (neither desired nor proposed by advocates of Muslim faith schooling) (cf Modood, 1997). For example, Arzu Merali from the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC), a proponent of Muslim schools and author of a recent report on the topic (IHRC, 2005c) argues that her organisation’s involvement has been precipitated due to this very issue



Our involvement has come on the back of a very real perception amongst the Muslim community that the struggle was to challenge a really lopsided way of funding faith schools by not basing it upon need or demographic variations and so forth. There was an understanding of why Catholic schools were funded but not why newer faith groups like Jewish communities were afforded these provisions and Muslim communities, with the largest range of children of school age in any community, weren't given the same support. It's part of the established Islamophobia, a perception of Muslims that sees something wrong with them, that they lack the capacity and so on (Merali, Interview 12 June 2006)

One way of examining whether or not this is a valid complaint is to look at the very issues Merali raises, namely the numerical and demographic data on Muslim children, including their ethnic composition and what it means in terms of identity articulations. This includes a consideration of whether or not a recognition and reflection of Muslim constituencies in the ratio of educational provisions afforded to Muslims can be explained by reference to 'established Islamophobia'.

### **3. Key data and identity implications**

Numerically, Muslim children of school age are disproportionately present in the British education system, making up nearly six per cent (500, 000) of the school population from under three percent (1.8m) of the national population (Halstead, 2005: 104, see ONS, 2005). Reflecting the particularly youthful demographic of British-Muslims, where 33.8 per cent fall into the 0-15 year age bracket and 18.2 per cent into the 16-24 year category (Scott et al, 2001), in some LEAs Muslim children comprise a significant presence within school districts and wards. This is partially the result of concentrated settlement patterns by first generation migrant workers (often intensified by "White flight" to the suburbs (cf Ratcliffe, 1996)) which, in cities such as Bradford, means that roughly 33 percent of total school population is of predominantly Muslim minority ethnic origin (OFSTED Audit Commission 2002). The outcome is that "a significant number of inner city schools in Bradford almost exclusively serve the Muslim population" (Halstead, 2005: 110), a pattern not uncommon in other cities home to significant post-war minority ethnic settlement (as listed in chp 3 and appendix 2).

As the discussion in chapter three would suggest, Muslim pupils throughout the British education system herald a diverse ethnic composition which mirrors that of the Muslim



population as a whole. Alongside the Pakistani (40 per cent) and Bangladeshi (20 per cent) contingent, it includes Turkish and Turkish Cypriot; Middle-Eastern; East-Asian; African-Caribbean (10 per cent); Mixed race/heritage (4 per cent); Indian or other South Asian (15 per cent), and not an insignificant number of White converts and Eastern-Europeans (1 per cent) (Burgess and Wilson, 2004). However, and as the concluding part of chapter three stressed, this ethnic heterogeneity need not rule out the prospect of an over-arching and differentiated Muslim identity. This is because Muslim educators appear to recognise this diversity whilst adopting what Werbner (1997) and Tariq Modood (2005) have characterised in their different ways as a type of “strategic essentialism” (Spivak, 1988). That is that although Muslim pupils are “multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-lingual in nature, it is the faith dimension of their lives which provides the unifying character” (Parker-Jenkins, 1995: 93). This understanding is clearly very evident in the view of Tahir Alam, trustee of *Al-Hijrah* secondary school, director of the teacher training wing of the *Al-Hijrah Trust*, and chair of the MCB education committee

[T]he experience they [pupils] will have in the school context will be broader than that of their home life. They will retain their, for example, Bangladeshi type cultural understandings of Islam, traditions, notions and beliefs so on, they will have those but they will get broader as people from different understandings will be there as well. And many of these [Muslim] schools have children from Somali backgrounds, Arab backgrounds, Pakistani and Bangladeshi and so on. So they are quite mixed from the point of view of national and cultural backgrounds, but the unifying thread is of course Islam in Britain (Alam, Interview 20 May 2006).

The head teacher of *Islamia*, Abdulla Trevathan, and deputy head of *Al-Hijrah*, Akhmed Hussein, both share this understanding when they report their enthusiasm in encouraging ethnically heterogeneous but Islamically inclusive interpretations of Muslim identity within the ethos of their schools

...children come to see that there are Muslims who come from a different culture who have a different way of doing things, and yet there's very strong common themes i.e. the Qu'ran and prayer. For example, we have some kids here from North Africa where during prayer the hands are down by the sides, and again differently kids from Iraq so there are all these different encounters going on. It's actually very freeing but stresses that amongst that diversity there's essential themes (Abdulla Trevathan, Interview 6 March, 2006).



Children at our school are not from one ethnic culture. We have children from Africa, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia and many other backgrounds, as well as England. When they are present in this setting, there is no separation between those cultures... once pupils have an understanding of their over-riding faith, and what their faith says about how to relate to people with other values, their mind will be more open (Akhmed Hussein, 9 February 2002 quoted in *The Tablet*).

This rehearses much of the discussion in the opening sections of the chapter three, with respect to what 'Islam' and 'being Muslim' entails, and is returned to in the closing sections of this chapter with respect to the ideals contained within Muslim school curricula. It is worth noting, however, that this imagining of a Muslim and Islamic identity in Muslim schooling goes hand in hand with a re-imagining of British identity. This is very evident in Trevathan's characterisation of the *Islamia Primary* 'ethos', one of the oldest Muslims schools in Britain and one of the first to receive state funding.

...if anything - this school is about creating a British-Muslim culture, instead of, as I've often said in the press, conserving or saving a particular culture, say from the subcontinent or from Egypt or from Morocco or from wherever it may be. Obviously those cultures may feed into this British-Muslim cultural identity, but we're not in the business of preserving... it's just not feasible and it's not sensible... it's dead: I mean I'm not saying *those* cultures are dead but it's a dead duck in the water as far as being *here* is concerned (Trevathan, Interview).

Trevathan is obviously keen to partner the Muslim dimension with the British so that instead of suffocating hybridity or encouraging reification, for example, the outward projection of this internal diversity informs a Du Boisian like pursuit of hyphenated identities. The casualty in this 'steering' of British-Muslim identity is the geographical-origin conception of ethnicity, and the scramble to de-emphasise the 'ethnic culture' in favour of an ecumenical Islamic identity soon gives rise to a key complaint. This includes the lack of provisions within comprehensive schooling to cater for identity articulations that are not premised upon the recognition of minority status per se, but which move outward on their own terms in an increasingly confident or assertive manner, based upon the subscription to a common Islamic tradition. Idreas Mears, director of the Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) stresses this position

I think a general point which is very important to get across is that state schools do not handle the meaning of Muslim identity well for the children. In actual fact, the way that general society looks at Muslims is as an immigrant minority-ethnic-



racial-group and how young people are made to look at themselves through the teaching in state schools tells them “you are this marginal group/minority group and have therefore got to integrate with the mainstream”. So there’s a process of marginalisation and that often leads to resentment. But in a Muslim school that identity is built upon being a Muslim *not* an ethnic minority. The impact of being Muslim is very different because the role of the Muslims in any situation is to be the middle nation to take the middle ground and be the model as witnesses of humanity. I think it gives young people a greater sense of who they are and how they can interact in society and therefore learn that Islam is not just a thing that is relevant to minority rights. Islam is relevant to economy, to foreign policy, etc which means that we’re not getting on to a stationary train but a train that is moving (Mears, Interview 1 April 2006).

This ‘train’ which moves between sites of boundary maintenance was understood in chapter three as an articulation of Muslim-consciousness. Mears expresses a ‘clean’ version of Muslim-consciousness that is free from ethnic and racial markers and therefore does not correspond to the lived reality, but is expressed as a hope to be realised through Muslim schooling environments. It is a desire evident in the findings of Patricia Kelly (1998: 203) who, in her ethnographic study of schooling choices made by Muslim parents with both secular and Islamic worldviews, concluded that “as some less-religious families do opt for specifically Muslim education, we can consider this as an example of a decision selectively to emphasise this pan-ethnic (Muslim) group identity, in order to reap whatever benefits - economic, social and psychological as well as spiritual - it offers.” This rationale permeates the Association of Muslim Social Scientists’ (AMSS) (2004: 11) manifesto, *Muslims on Education*, in which ‘Muslim’ refers “not only [to] practising adherents of Islam, but also those who identify themselves ‘Muslim’ (without necessarily being practising) or who belong to a household or family that holds Islam as its descendant faith.”

As chapter three argued, this conception of Muslim identity is expressed and consolidated in survey data that inevitably includes both types, behavioural and attitudinal, but reports that 74 per cent of a representative *adult* Muslim sample in Britain say that religion is ‘very important’ to them (Modood et al, 1997: 331) without necessitating an inquiry into their degree of religiosity, let alone what this might entail behaviourally. It also emphasises that much of the motivation for Muslim schooling reflects the desire of Muslim parents who embrace it as an avenue through which to instil some sense of a Muslim heritage in all its



heterogeneity. What this means for the development of the child's autonomy (Marples, 2005) and where this desire sits in relation to the charge of 'indoctrination' (HPG, 2001) is discussed in the second half of this chapter, but it is worth noting here that there is no entirely coherent view amongst all Muslim parents about faith schooling<sup>2</sup> and, since over ninety-seven per cent of Muslim children are educated in state schools, Muslim parents and broader communities recognise that where they wish to transfer aspects of their religious heritage onto their children it is the character of state schools that they will have to change<sup>3</sup> (Ansari, 2004). This understanding has informed – and continues to inform – a parallel debate about the schooling of ethnic minority children which has been raging since the nineteen sixties; the role and content of the school curricular, and parental rights (Crowther Report, 1960; Newsom Report, 1963; Plowden Report, 1967; Coard, 1971; Bagley, 1973; Rampton, 1982; Taylor and Hegarty, 1985; Swann Report, 1985; Burnage Report, 1989; Basit, 1997). The words of Bradford's first Muslim Lord Mayor are instructive in demonstrating the strong

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<sup>2</sup> There exists no national survey that systematically examines Muslim parents' desires on this issue but according to one source 50 per cent of South Asian Muslim parents are in favour, which contrasts with 80 per cent suggested by the Muslim Educational Trust (see Shaikh and Kelly (1989)). Interestingly, the *Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities* (1997) found that the *ethnic* composition of a school was more important for white respondents than it was for ethnic minorities, whilst preference for *religious* composition interestingly ranged from Catholics, who were the most inclined to desire faith based schools, to Hindus, who were the least inclined for faith based schooling, with Muslims and Protestants falling somewhere in the middle (see Modood et al 1997: 323).

<sup>3</sup> It is this realisation that has made schooling a "major area of struggle for equality of opportunity and assertion of identity" (Ansari, 2004: 298), and an area where "in the face of major opposition from broad sections of...society" (ibid) Muslims have succeeded in having some basic 'needs' recognised, eg. provision of *halal* (Kosher) meals. In this respect some LEAs have historically developed in directions that others have not. From a multicultural perspective one of the most progressive is that of Birmingham, which in 1975 introduced a new Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education "which required that pupils learn about and learn from the great world faiths present in the city" (Hewer, 2001: 517). Another was Bradford which promoted innovations such as the provision of *halal* meat in schools in 1983. Indeed, in 1982 the LEA in Bradford issued guidelines stating that all residents of the city had an equal right to the maintenance of distinctive identities derived from culture, language, religion and custom, and that so far as was compatible with individual needs, the authority's provision of services should respect the strength and variety of cultural values. Another was that all children in Bradford were entitled to equality of treatment, equality of opportunity and equality of services and should be offered a shared educational experience. Both of these positions were set out in the LEA's policy statement and gave rise to the following statement of aims: (i) to seek ways of preparing all children and young people for life in a multi-cultural society; (ii) to counter racism and racist attitudes, and the inequalities and discrimination which results from them; (iii) to build upon and develop the strengths of cultural and linguistic diversity; (iv) to respond sensitively to the special needs of minority groups. Whilst it recognised the organizational difficulties of achieving these aims, it was convinced that the educational needs of ethnic minority children could be met within a comprehensive education system based upon a common school curriculum (City of Bradford Local Administrative Memorandum No 2/82), also see Singh (2002).



feeling amongst many Muslim parents that, rather than looking to separate schooling, a focus upon the state system should be encouraged: "I don't want separation in any form...what we want is our cultural needs, especially in the education system" (quoted in Halstead, 1988: 52). This is of course qualified by the observation that "many Muslims who themselves do not favour separate Muslim schools maintain that the choice should be available to others" (Ansari, 2004: footnote 78), parallel to choices available to other groups. The onus is then placed upon the state to accommodate Muslim communities, parents and children as they have other faiths.

At the same time, the validity of this rationale - that Muslim minorities who mobilise for Muslim faith schooling are simply seeking an expansion of the faith schooling sector - is rejected by prominent figures in both anti-religious *and* anti-racist camps alike. Terry Sanderson, President of the National Secular Society, for example, is convinced that

...we're heading towards a catastrophe unless the government change their policy, and there seems to be no difference of opinion between any of the main parties and I can't see a change happening, and we're heading towards further separation in education by the creation of more faith schools. The more Christian one they create, the more the clamour becomes for Muslim schools to be created and I think it's a disaster because the only way that we're going to break down barriers between people is to bring them together at a very early age and this government is going in completely the opposite direction to that. It is creating schools that will keep them separate (Interview with Tarry Sanderson, 8 June, 2007).<sup>4</sup>

In less apocalyptic but equally strident terms, Dan Lyndon, director of the 'black history 4 schools' project and a leading member of the Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA), voices similar objections on the grounds of separatism and in-egalitarianism

I am worried about the development of faith schools because I think that just encourages separation... Personally, I would never teach in a religious school. Whatever religion, absolutely fundamentally, no. [...] I think if you took the approach of religions supporting tolerance and supporting loose moral code which we follow then I think there is no reason why they can't be compatible with anti-racist education. I suppose if you had the idea of, if you've got an area where you are prioritising one over the other then that's going to cause conflict and that's going to cause problems. If you come from an egalitarian philosophy then hopefully that should over ride that (Interview with Dan Lyndon, 13 June, 2007).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The issue of 'contact' is addressed at length later in the chapter (see sec. 8).

<sup>5</sup> Though this is not a universal view amongst anti-racists, not least because some have, in the past, also endorsed the need for 'black' schooling. To this end Lee Jasper, race equality advisor to the London Mayor, clarifies his own position: "What I did advocate is the following: that there are already majority black schools that have majority white teachers and white governors, what I've said is that if you have



The most nuanced and historically informed assessment, however, is offered by Tony Breslin, Director of the Citizenship foundation

The fact of the matter is that if one looks at the history of the emergence of any group of faith schools they have tended to emerge from a desire to strengthen and support that faith in a particular societal setting. Catholic Schools are a case in point. I'm not convinced that we are at that starting point today. The starting point of the first generations of faith schools, were much more mono cultural societies. Faith schools, it seems to me, offer a lot in terms of ethos and all the rest of it. I just wonder whether non-faith schools can do the same thing and whether we should seek to get them to do that. [...] Part of the debate clearly about faith schools at the moment, is not really about faith schools, it's just the specificity of Muslim Schools, and I think people should be more honest about that. [...] I don't think that because a particular group was granted the right to build a faith school fifty years ago, it is a rationale to grant that to a different group now or another group in fifty years time. I think it's about saying, where is our society at (Interview with Tony Breslin, 12 June 2007).

Breslin is undoubtedly correct to highlight the historical dimension of faith schooling (discussed at length in sec. 6) against which contemporary arguments concerning parity are often made, as well as the centrality of Muslim mobilisations to these arguments. Yet, whilst it may be true to say that Muslim communities have been the most vocal in seeking inclusion in the faith schooling sector, to what extent is it true to say *that they themselves* have premised these mobilisations *solely* upon the issue of parity and, if they have not, what other factors have been and remain salient?

#### 4. Muslim motivations for faith schools

Bearing in mind the diversity in being Muslim, a number of factors coalesce to inform the broad interest in Muslim schooling.

##### 4.1. Holistic Education

The first and arguably broadest factor is paralleled by the interest in other religiously informed faith schooling, and stems from the desire to incorporate more faith-based

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a school that s 90 or 80% per cent of one ethnicity or another, then its quite proper to expect the teaching staff and governors to reflect that local community. That was my view and I'm still of that view, and when majority black churches want to get together and do that they should be able to do so. That doesn't extend to creating an apartheid regime within education but it does extend to creating the choice for minority communities" (Interview with Lee Jasper, 26 July 2007).

principles into an integrated education system, so that the ‘whole person’ can be educated in an Islamic environment (AMSS, 2004; Hewer, 2001). This would *presuppose* faith rather than treating it as something extraneous to education and external to its major objects (Ashraf, 1990). For example, one of the recommendations to emerge from the First World Conference on Muslim Education states that “education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality through the training of spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses” (cited in AMSS, 2004: 12). Two approaches proposed by the AMSS in their position paper on Muslim schools include the Steiner and Montessori approaches, both of which encourage personal and team responsibility while “the child’s creativity is also given full freedom for expression” (ibid: 19). Hence the objective is to encourage intellectual, spiritual, and moral development within an Islamic ethos and framework. Thus, at *Islamia School*, Abdullah Trevathan states that a key curriculum objective is to prevent sources of Islamic guidance from becoming extrinsic to educational development, “where the sunnah and the Qu’ran...becomes the third person in an encounter”. In his view, children will only properly know, explore and evaluate knowledge presented within an Islamic environment if the children are incorporated into Islam’s interpretative traditions

There are two types of views of the divinity in theological perspectives: in classical terms one is *tashbih* which is like Allah’s nearness, immersion in our daily life or divine interventions in daily affairs, and the other is *tanzih*: the incomparability or what they call negative theology, the absolute omnipotence, distance from the individual... Now I believe what we’re trying to do in this school is to return to a more *tashbih*... it’s very important that they’re [the pupils] exposed to the classical *ussal al-fiqh*... basically the methodology of applying principles to different situations, rather than taking or transporting rules or regulations out of another time and another place...literally (Trevathan, Interview).

Perhaps surprisingly, given its pragmatic emphasis upon the present, part of this project at *Islamia School* proceeds through an introduction to classical Arabic; presented as a conduit through which this holistic immersion can begin

We teach classical Qu’ranic Arabic. We think it’s fundamental to the flowering of Muslim culture that the language of its philosophy, the language particularly of its spirituality is taught. And also there are key concepts such that if you’ve got the Arabic you immediately have access to that nuance, that feeling that the word evokes! (ibid).



*Islamia School* is not alone in this view, for it is common to find the teaching of Qu'ranic Arabic listed on many Muslim Schools' curricula and mission statements (IHRC, 2005c). This manner of incorporating faith-based principles into an integrated education system, as opposed to a more straightforward approach of teaching genesis or religious history, for example, is the preferred approach that is advocated by the Association for Muslim Schools (AMS). To this end Idreas Mears describes how a child's understanding of the interpretative traditions within Islam is akin to wielding a powerful educational 'tool' that is simultaneously spiritual and educative

Muslims are people that bring down a meaning to an event: we're creatures of meaning, and a Muslim expresses his real meaning by his *evada* because he sees that the ultimate meaning is to be a worshipper of Allah but then bringing that down onto the axis of events changes how you act in the world. So I think the most important for Muslim schools is to give young people that as a tool in their hands that they can pick up and run with (Mears, Interview).

The characterisation of Muslim schools as providing Muslim children with something like a 'launch-pad' is returned to later in the chapter during the discussion of autonomy (sec. 7.1), but it is important to stress that this view is not advanced naively by the Mears. In a measure of increasing confidence, critical self-evaluation, and institutional networking, the AMS has been at the forefront of creating an inter-faith 'inspectorate' to monitor the content and standard of different faith based schooling. This is informed by the recognition that whilst the areas of numeracy and literacy are stringently monitored by OFSTED, religious instruction is more likely to be left to the school's discretion and so may not always be of an appropriate standard

The AMS has made an application to the DfES to deliver inspection services for OFSTED inspections of independent Muslim Schools. And we've done it in conjunction with a group of independent Christian schools – the Christian Schools Trust. We've joined together to create the 'faith schools inspectorate' and we will be able to inspect member schools: Christian or Muslim. As well as looking at the areas that are necessary in the OFSTED criteria as to whether a school is providing numeracy and literacy and citizenship skills etc, we will be looking at how the school is delivering the religious ethos, because up until this point we accept that Muslim schools are Muslim schools because they say so. There's no real inspection of that and there can be a whole spectrum of people delivering *nothing* about Islam at all, but instead being a cultural protection zone for children and that's happened for children quite a lot, especially in the early years when the main criteria of a Muslim school wasn't about teaching Islam but the protection of

Muslim girls from going into the state system. It was culturally driven rather than Islamically driven I think (Mears, Interview).

Once again, Mears is at pains to stress the distinction between school premised upon an ethnic origin conception of Islam, driven by a desire for ‘cultural protection zones’, and an Islamically driven environment that moves outward to build upon evaluative criteria already established and in place. This gives support to Jacobson’s (1997) “religion-ethnic culture distinction” discussed in the chapter three (sec. 10), which argues that ethnicity is increasingly peripheral amongst some British-Muslims. Placing ethnicity in binary opposition to religion is, however, not necessarily the best explanation of this tendency when compared to the alternatives discussed throughout chapter three and summarised in the conclusion (sec 9.4).

#### *4.2. Separation of sexes*

The criticism that Muslim schools can serve as cultural protection zones is sometimes made through pointing to the evidence of Muslim parents’ preferences for single sex schooling (Dawkins, 2007; Grayling, 2006; Bell, 2005; NSS, 2004; HPG, 2001). To be sure, and through an interpretation of Islam which posits that “after puberty boys and girls should be separated” (Hashmi, 2002: 14), there is certainly a desire to develop ‘safe’ environments for post-pubescent children, and in this regard single-sex schooling undoubtedly appeals to Muslim parents (Hewer, 2001). The retention of single sex schools was recommended by the Swann Committee (1985) and their increasing non-availability may also be influencing Muslim parents’ interest in faith schooling

Is this conservatism an example of the sorts of cultural protection zones feared by Mears? It is worth noting how, according to Trevathan, this is not an expression of separatism since “in many ways the community want their children to be raised in a safe environment but still aspire to what successful people aspire to in the west” (Interview), namely social mobility through education. According to Hussain of *Al-Hijrah school*, a school which maintains separate teaching rooms, the motivation for single sex schooling is “to ensure that they [pupils] are more focused on their studies.... it is primarily about their learning”. Elsewhere,



the Muslim Parents Association (MPA) formed in 1974 on this single issue, and continues to support the creation of a number of independent single-sex Muslim schools. In addition to *Al-Hijrah*, the creation *Feversham College* in Bradford was to some extent modelled on Catholic faith schooling (Halstead, 1991), by employing separate teaching rooms (cf Haw, 1998). This is not a policy desired for primary schooling, however, and is contradicted by some existing co-educational Muslim schools that employ mixed teaching classes. So while the demand for single sex schooling is neither universally sought by Muslim educators, nor is unproblematic, it is not without precedent amongst other groups, and to view it as an example of Muslim patriarchy suggests that it is implausible that valid pedagogical arguments may be supportive of single-sex schooling (Keaton, 1999). This is, then, undoubtedly an issue that requires further, ideally comparative, inquiry.

#### 4.3. *Specialist Training*

A third factor informing the Muslim interest in faith schooling is the current lack of specialist training in Islamic religious sciences, the provision of which might allow young people to “be educated to serve their communities as potential religious leaders” (Hewer, 2001: 518). This includes the desire to have more British trained theologians who can discuss theological issues with a contemporary resonance to the lived experiences of being Muslim in Britain. The immediacy of this requirement is illustrated with the example of unsuitable religious instructors, including non-British Imams that are unfamiliar with the particular contexts and experiential lives of Muslims in Britain

The problem is that there's a vacuum here because the mosques just aren't set up to deal with the problems of modern people. If you import an Imam from Egypt or from Pakistan and somebody comes to them with a problem which is within a modern European context, it would often be things that the Imams would have never encountered in their lives and so have no means - or the wrong means - of dealing with it (Trevathan, Interview).

Tahir Alam sketches out some of the dynamics informing the considerations and balances that schools must take into account when off-setting the desire for ‘home-grown’ religious instructors, with broader and more wide-ranging programmes of education

There are schools that do actually give more curriculum time to more traditional sciences, you call it theology but I would call it traditional sciences to do with *Sunnah* and *Hadith* and those sorts of subjects. So there are schools that do specialise in this but they also do English, Maths and Science...they just don't allocate as much time to these subjects as they would if the school was funded by the state. So there you have the flexibility as an independent institution so, currently, all those that are state funded couldn't have the luxury of being able to do that. I think schools would say that yes they would like more time but there's not enough time to deliver the national curriculum, which is a requirement, as well as devoting adequate time to really focus properly on some of the traditional sciences and subjects as well. So there's a trade-off, I suppose, and a debate about the balance in each school (Alam, Interview).

At the same time, Alam is not alone amongst advocates and co-ordinators of Muslim Schooling in Britain who point to an inevitable limitation in the scope to incorporate, into the state sector, schools which do deliver a greater proportion of theological education and training, in order to attend to the aspiration for establishments that can offer specialist training

If a school wants to retain an emphasis on teaching traditional sciences, and for them that's important perhaps, then they may well be reluctant to receive funding because they then have to teach the national curriculum and compromises have to be made on other things such as teaching the Qu'ran and Islamic history to a level they would like and so on. So some of those institutions that specialise in these areas are not going to come into the state sector, because if they did they'd have to drop everything else and change the nature of their institution to a very large degree and that's not what they're about (ibid.).

The enthusiasm for, hesitation at, becoming co-opted into the state sector is returned to below with a more detailed consideration of the factors informing or dissuading successful independent Muslim schools from seeking voluntary aided status.

#### 4.4. *Ethnocentric curricula on Islam*

Fourthly, in order to impart more accurate knowledge of Islamic civilisations; literature; languages and arts (both past and present), there is a desire to see broader aspects of Islamic culture embedded within the teaching and ethos of school curricula, which are otherwise normatively couched within a Christian-European tradition. As it stands, however, and as Alam recognises, there appears to be scope in existing conventions to address some of these concerns



The national curriculum does lend itself to a reasonable degree of flexibility, and you can read it objectively when you're teaching geography, history or so on, and you can be fairly inclusive, barring resource issues. There's a lot of material available to teach the national curriculum from a certain sort of perspective if you like, so if you wanted to be more inclusive of the Islamic perspective whilst delivering the national curriculum, there is a pretty decent scope for that (Alam, Interview).

Whilst this maybe so, it remains the case that the sorts of materials currently adopted in the teaching of Islam are often unsatisfactory. For example, Douglass and Shaikh's (2004) study found that throughout commonly used textbooks, Islam is rarely portrayed in the ways its adherents understand, but more through the ethnocentric perspectives of editors who frame their commentary for textbook adoption committee audiences. Common examples of the sorts of inaccuracies that follow from this tendency include the portrayal of the prophet Muhammad as the 'inventor' of Islam, rather than a messenger or prophet, as well as an artificial separation of Islam from other monotheistic faiths. This has led Ameli *et al* (2005: 26) to argue that "it is difficult to escape the conclusion that textbooks deliberately downplay or exclude connections between Islam and Abraham in order to maintain neat partitions among the symbols, beliefs and major figures. This complaint feeds into the broader charge that LEAs have only "tinkered with the largely ethnocentric curricula, leaving Muslim children feeling alienated and with damaged self-esteem" (Ansari, 2002: 22).

#### *4.5. Low educational attainment*

Finally, there is concern over the lower educational attainment of some Muslim children, Bangladeshi and Pakistani boys in particular, and the belief that greater accommodation of religious and cultural difference will help address this low achievement and prevent further marginalisation from taking place.

There is a gap between British Muslims and other groups that underscores the urgency of the need for target-based policies to address these problems if we're going to ensure that Muslims don't become an underclass in society... underachievement in education will have a knock on effect for employment and so on (Inayat Bunglawala, Interview, 21 May, 2006).

According to ONS (2004) data, nearly 50 per cent of men and women of Bangladeshi ethnic origin and 27 per cent of men and 40 per cent of women of Pakistani ethnic origin hold no

academic qualifications (see also Haque (2002)). Educational outcomes amongst young Muslims in relation to this general ethnic breakdown are similarly concerning. According to some sources, in 2000 only 30 per cent of young males with Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic origin achieved five GCSEs<sup>6</sup> at grades A\*-C, compared with 50 per cent of the national population as a whole.<sup>7</sup> Within this, however, data from the National Literacy Trust (2004) highlights how in Birmingham (home to around 125,000 Muslims - the largest concentration of a Muslim population outside London) Muslim girls have been outperforming Muslim boys, with 50 per cent of girls of Pakistani origin (compared with 33 per cent of boys) and 58 per cent of girls of Bangladeshi origin (compared with 43 per cent of boys) achieving five GCSEs at grades A\*-C or more.

According to Halstead (2005: 136), these figures indicate a “sense of alienation and disaffection felt by many young male Muslims at school”, an assertion given empirical support in a study undertaken by the IQRA Trust (see Pye, Lee and Bhabra (2000), and which was also raised by the CMEB (2000: 152) which recommended that the government implement targets to decrease the number of school exclusions currently experienced by some Muslim groups. While it is accepted that parental education and social class play an important role in shaping these educational outcomes, Halstead (2005: 137) lists a host of other relevant issues: “religious discrimination; Islamophobia; the lack of Muslim role models in schools; low expectations on the part of teachers; time spent in mosque schools; the lack of recognition of the British Muslim identity of the student.” According to Alam, Muslim schools sensitive to these experiences can help elevate educational outcomes

On the whole the Muslim schools are performing pretty well; they're better than their like for like in state sector... In terms of the focus they provide for their children, and the dedication, and quite often many of the teachers in these schools are not even qualified teachers, yet their students get better results than people who are qualified! You do get examples where Muslim schools in the independent sector perform badly, but they're resource issues really, to do with under-funding and not really anything else... shoe string budgets and you can't really do anything on those. Barring those sorts of schools, and there are a few around, the vast

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<sup>6</sup> The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is the standard qualification for students enrolled in compulsory schooling until the age of 16 years.

<sup>7</sup> For a much fuller statistical summary see Halstead's (2005) excellent discussion from which I draw.



majority of schools in fact – if you take into account the student budgets that they operate on – what they do is in fact quite remarkable (Alam, Interview).

The academic achievements of Muslim schools Alam is pointing to include the examples of 100 per cent of G.C.S.E entrants from *Al-Furqan Community College* (Birmingham), *Leicester Islamic Academy*, *Madani School* (Tower Hamlets), *Tayyibah School* (Hackney), and *Brondesbury College* (Brent) achieving five or more passes at grades A\*-C; along with *Feversham College* (Bradford) achieving 53 per cent of such passes, higher than the national average (and well above the Bradford average). It is also evident in the successes of *Islamia School* coming first (or third, depending on the measure used) in a district of fifty-one schools examined at the key stage two level (ibid).

## 5. Form and structure of schools

Where Muslim parents have opted out of the state-sector, desires for more holistic schooling have resulted in the creation of over one hundred independent schools with a Muslim ethos, educating over 14,000 pupils from ethnically diverse communities in predominantly inner city areas. These institutions deliver both ‘secular’ and Islamic education, and are best described as Muslim schools with “the goal of living up to the standards of Islam, rather than implying its achievement” (Dunn and Shaikh, 2004: 8).

Typically established in homes, mosques and similar buildings by groups of concerned parents and community activists<sup>8</sup> (Hewer, 2001: 518), the vast majority are low-fee schools in poor quality buildings which, unsurprisingly, lack many of the basic facilities common to state schools (Walford, 2003). The main reason for this is financial insecurity. Since they rely upon community support and are seldom purpose built, they may open and close depending upon the resources and stability afforded by the local Muslim communities themselves. Thus every school is, according to Trevathan, “a microcosm of the society around it,” which means that, despite being private institutions, they are better thought of as

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<sup>8</sup> Tahir Alam is not exceptional in recounting his story of involvement: “I got involved in education sometime ago just to help local schools to maybe improve their standards and provide some kind of rigour and challenge in relation to performance... that’s why I got involved locally and then tried to get these issues on the agenda elsewhere through my involvement with the MCB”.

“community-based schools” since they rarely operate commercially.<sup>9</sup> A good example is *Al-Furqan* school in Birmingham, one of the first primary schools to be awarded state funding. It started in 1989 as “a drop-in centre for families who were home-schooling older girls rather than sending them to non-Muslim co-educational schools” (Walford, 2003: 287).

From this initial development, it progressed quickly and was later co-opted into the state-sector. This type of school contrasts, however, with ‘schools for Muslims’ and there is a subtle but important distinction between these two. In the case of Muslim Schools, “the intention is to develop an entire ethos consistent with religious values”, whilst ‘schools for Muslims’ might aspire “to being fully Muslim in nature but in reality tend to be characterised by a religious identity that does not go much further in terms of developing curricula and ethos, often due to staffing and financial difficulties” (Parker-Jenkins (2002: 278). This distinction is sharpened by the AMSS’ (2004: 11) analyses which uses the term ‘Muslim School’

...to describe a school that seeks to promote an overtly Islamic education for its pupils. This is in distinction to schools with a large number of Muslims or indeed those that provide education that is acceptable to Muslims, both of which we have classified as ‘Non-Muslim Schools’. In no way is this a derogatory distinction between the two.

### 5.1. Registration

All independent schools are now required to register with the Department of Education and Skills under *The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations* (2003). Failure to do so risks the prospect of closure and since the criteria are not dissimilar from the conditions that must be met before VA status (discussed in the next section) can be achieved, it was feared that these guidelines would have a disproportionate affect on Muslim schools. One such recent closure has included Scotland’s only Muslim School, *Muhammad*

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<sup>9</sup> A fascinating illustration of the community focus involves pastoral advice to pupils’ parents: “One of the things we’ve realised frequently is that first of all we’re not just a school - we’re much more. In many ways we’re educating parents as much as we’re educating children and frequently we get a request for an appointment to see me and they’ll insist that it’s something personal, and then they’ll come in and they won’t be parents or prospective parent, but a married couple having relationship problems. So myself and Sheikh Ahmed, who is the imam here, would – if we could – give some marriage counselling. And we will do that if the parents are of our children because it’s part of our responsibility to the children as educators” (Abdulla Trevathan).



*Zakariya girls' secondary* near Dundee which, having offered “a very limited curriculum, consisting of Arabic, sewing and cookery” (quoted in the *Daily Record*, 25 January 2006), has now been removed from the Register of Independent Schools. It is therefore surprising that these guidelines are viewed as a process necessary to raising the basic standard of all would be Muslim schools. The is evident is Mears' account

There always was a history of starting up and then not managing to continue. Those schools were born and died, almost like they were still born. Whereas now if they get through the registration process they're prone to grow very quickly. At this point I actually welcome anything that makes Muslim schools more rigorous in their own standards and it doesn't just have to be about the registration and inspection process which looks at the general criteria of Education. Now, where they do come into existence, they're stronger schools than they would otherwise have been. (Mears, Interview).

In this sense, not only has the requirement been embraced but its effects welcomed

There was a lot of concern in some quarters, as it made the process more rigorous, and it raised the benchmark. So you're required to have a proper building and a better quality of teaching and so on. So the benchmark is higher and you're given limited time to achieve full registration, but you can be provisionally registered where the benchmark is very low to start with, basically nothing, really, depending on how many children you've got, and then they give you two years to make sure you reach some of the other requirements, which are essential for you to be a registered school. So it's a more rigorous process but I think it hasn't had a negative effect, because all it means is that people need to be in a better position before they start, and have a reasonable plan for the capital and financial plan that's required. So people have had to raise their game, if you know what I mean, so I suppose it's been positive in that sense, although it's made life difficult for some schools (Alam, Interview).

Of course the incentive for official registration is the accompanying professional inspection and advice (Hewer, 2001: 518), with the long-term aim of becoming co-opted into the state sector under the status of a Voluntary Aided (VA) school. This process has often been co-ordinated by organisations such as the AMS and the Islamic Schools Trust (IST), which facilitate many schools dialogue with LEAs and the DfES.

## **6. Government funding and 'Voluntary Aided' schooling**

The notion of VA schools has its roots in the organic creation of a 'dual system' (O'Keefe, 1986) organised in terms of parallel, but interacting, state and faith based schooling. On the one hand this resulted from the “contributions of parish clerics to village teaching, church foundation grammar schools” of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,

which established churches as almost “exclusive providers in the early stages of progress towards universal education” (Skinner, 2002: 173). On the other hand, and notwithstanding the hesitancy of Victorians to get involved in “what had, hitherto, been a purely private concern” (Parker-Jenkins, 2002: 275), the social and economic upheaval of the industrial revolution led to the realisation that education was “an important agent of social reform to assist the nation in its economic endeavours” (ibid). This culminated in the creation of a statutory system of public education with the 1870 Elementary Education Act. As Skinner (2002: 174) notes, however, this failed to satisfy competing Christian bodies in their views about education, the practice of providing schooling, and the money with which to do so

The established church of England was not the only powerful Christian denomination in Britain. In Scotland, the majority of Scottish people were not Anglican but Presbyterians. Protestant nonconformists were strong in Wales and England. The increase in early 18<sup>th</sup> century migration from Ireland meant that Roman Catholic presence was also increasing. *These groups stood out against the state for giving every opportunity to the Church of England to proselytise through the education system* (emphasis added).

In general terms, the introduction of the 1944 Education Act sought to reach a compromise between the historic contribution of faith groups and their internal differences with the increasing role of the state in education. This was pursued through awarding independent faith schools the option – subject to meeting the appropriate standards and criteria – of becoming ‘Voluntary Aided’ (VA) or ‘Voluntary Controlled’ (VC). The former status allows the provision of denominational religious instruction and acts of worship, as well as the right to appoint teachers on the understanding that the school accept half the cost of any structural or building improvements. In addition, the majority of school administrators could be drawn from the diocesan board of education or religious authority. The latter, meanwhile, incurred no financial responsibilities but the schools would have to surrender all denominational worship, and the majority of administrators would be provided by the LEA.

Most importantly, for this discussion is that, although it was not anticipated that “other religious groups would one day like to take advantage of the provisions” (Hewer 2001: 518), the relevant clauses of the 1944 Act did not specify *which* denominational groups were to be



included in the scheme. Less encouragingly, however, the position that Muslims have found themselves in relation to this provision is that

...new schools are rarely required and built, so that if Muslim schools are to be admitted to the Voluntary Aided category they will of necessity be already in existence. In effect, this means that, in the future, a state funded Muslim school will already exist either as a local authority 'public' school or as a private establishment. (Hewer 2001: 518).

This has led to a number of campaigns by Muslim organisations to take over schools with a significant concentration of Muslim pupils already in attendance. The most recent effort has culminated in a campaign by the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) in Scotland to turn a currently Roman Catholic School in Pollockshields (Glasgow), which has an eighty per cent Muslim pupil intake, into a VA Muslim school (for more examples see Hashmi, 2002: 15).

One of the leading proponents of the MAB's campaign is Osama Saeed, who argues that

We are the second-largest faith grouping in Scotland after Christianity yet we do not have a single Muslim school. Muslim children have to attend supplementary classes on weekends and evenings for their Islamic studies, and Muslim schools would go a major way to redressing this problem. (Saeed, 2005: quoted in the Glasgow Evening Times).<sup>10</sup>

It is difficult not to view this example as evidence of Hewitt's (1998: 22) conclusion that Muslims who prefer denominational education are "merely following in the footsteps of Anglicans, Catholics and Jews in seeking to give their children a solid foundation in their own faith before they are let loose in the wider world". The preceding discussion illustrates that the British education system has historically managed a multi-faith system, with the 1944 Education Act containing within it the provision for government support of schools formed by Muslim groups.

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<sup>10</sup> This contrasts negatively with the success of other schools such as Al-Hijrah: "For some schools it was a long battle, but for AH it wasn't really, as it got its status within the year of applying, as soon it applied it got it more or less straight away. It's quite a rigorous process but turned out to be more or less straightforward in the end (Alam, Interview)."

## Part B: Considering the charges

What the discussion thus far has not addressed is how Muslim educators can address some of the key arguments against Muslim schools. These range from a principled philosophical opposition to all faith schooling through to more focused arguments concerning the nature of Muslim schools and their impact on social cohesion in particular.

### 7.1. *The Argument for Autonomies*

For example, one of the most commonly held views of education is that it should encourage the development of rational and moral autonomy which, in the recent liberal tradition, is characterised by the work of Ronald Dworkin (1985) Amy Guttmann (1995) and Joseph Raz (1986), amongst others. This position opposes all forms of faith schooling and strenuously argues that all autonomy-supporting societies *must* guard children from “believers who wish to impose on them a non-autonomous conception of the good life” (White, 1990: 105). Thus, according to Akerman (1980: 139), education should provide children with “a sense of the very different lives that could be theirs - so that, as they approach maturity, they have the cultural materials available to build lives equal to their evolving conceptions of the good”. This is a central argument contained within the Humanist Philosophers’ Group’s (HPG) (2001: 10) influential pamphlet, *Religious Schools: The Case Against*, which begins by charging faith schooling with ‘indoctrination’, characterised as limiting the autonomy of a child by implanting beliefs that neither empirical evidence nor rational argument might change. They then state that

...given the importance of fundamental religious and value commitments to a person’s life, such commitments should be entered into only subject to all the normal requirements for valid consent: in particular, competence, full information and voluntariness. Religious schools...are likely to violate these requirements, partly because of (younger) children’s lack of autonomy and partly because of the nature of such schools’ missions.

According to this perspective, young people in religious schools are denied both the option and opportunity to develop the competencies in making informed choices, specifically because such schools are predisposed to indoctrinate and proselytise.



There are two very interesting and equally challenging responses to this argument. The first begins by rejecting the *a priori* assumption that faith schools are necessarily out to indoctrinate and proselytise. For example, and in a similar manner to which Muslim educators view their schools as a place of *Holistic Education*, the educational philosopher Terrence McLaughlin (1992: 123) introduces the idea of multiple launch pads for autonomy. This means that although one starting point for a child arises from the experience in a common school, this does not invalidate others because

...another possible and legitimate starting point is from the basis of experience of a particular 'world view' or cultural identity; a substantiality of belief, practise or value, as in (say) a certain sort of religious school. Such schools, in relation to which parents can exercise legitimate rights of choice, would not seek to entrap their pupils in a particular vision of the good, but try to provide a distinctive starting point from which their search for autonomous agency can proceed.

This offers a more contextual comprehension of how a child's autonomy may be developed and is more comfortable with competing conceptions of education amongst different cultural constituencies within a multicultural context that is not hostile to the wishes of religious peoples (Modood, 2005b; Spinner-Halev, 2000). More recently, McLaughlin *et al* (2003) have gone further in arguing that it is quite feasible for faith schools to adopt an approach towards education that is *relatively* neutral - such as those favoured by the AMSS, outlined earlier. They argue that since children have to accept many things on trust in order eventually to progress to autonomy (and possibly reject those things later), religion should be treated no differently.

Nevertheless, the HPG rightly questions whether indoctrination can ever be avoided, given the difficulty of teaching religion in such a way that children can grasp and appreciate it in any depth without necessarily accepting beliefs which are difficult, if not impossible, to revise or reject when one has reached an adult age. This is an important criticism which leads to a related debate about the nature of religious knowledge and the conditions under which it can be acquired. Espousing a "Christian perspective" on this matter, Ahdar and Leigh (2005: 233) argue

...a Christian upbringing need not involve hampering a child's autonomy regarding critical and independent thought. It is just that critical thought and the *right* use of reason ought to be undertaken from a base of faith first. [...] This is autonomy, but not of the Enlightenment kind. It eschews self-direction and self-mastery by the individual's use of unbounded reason. The radically autonomous self cannot live the good life; reason is tainted by the Fall. We are back to a Christian paradox again. It is not a matter of fostering self-esteem but rather self-denial; lose oneself in God to truly find oneself.

The Muslim perspective meanwhile eschews the idea of reason being tainted by 'The Fall' since in Islam humanity is brought into the world in a state of innocence (*fitra*) much like a blank-sheet (*tabula rasa*). This means, "the concept of 'original sin' as presented in Christian theology is non-existent in the newborn child" (Hussein, 2004: 319), something returned to during the discussion of what a Muslim school's curriculum might look like. In the meantime we should take from Ahdar and Leigh (2005) the implication that, unless a child acquires this knowledge at a sufficient depth of understanding, they will not be able to exercise valid consent anyway, so that from their perspective the goal of autonomy is already thwarted. Accordingly, the curriculum and environment of the religious school may be essential to the achievement of a level of understanding that makes informed consent (and thus autonomy) possible.

The second potential response to the HPG's charge of indoctrination has two parts to it but begins by making a relational argument which contests the assumption that secular schools can avoid indoctrination by being a-religious. For example, Arnsone and Shapiro (1996) point to a sleight of hand by arguing that in non-religious contexts certain possibilities or options are only made available to adults because they have prioritised them to the exclusion of many others in childhood, e.g. developing skills in certain arts or sports. As Ahdar and Leigh (2005: 228) argue

The rigorous keeping of a child's future to maximise adult opportunities would, in effect, deprive the child of the possibility of becoming a professional ballerina or footballer. Could it not be argued that the same applies to religious upbringing?

A much stronger objection is made by Grace (2002: 14), however, who laments the degree of bad faith central to the charge of indoctrination against religious faith schools, specifically because secular schools are not themselves ideologically free zones



Secularism has its own ideological assumptions about the human person, the ideal society, the ideal system of schooling and the meaning of human existence. While these assumptions may not be formally codified into a curriculum subject designated 'secular education' as an alternative to 'religious education', they characteristically permeate the ethos and culture of state-provided secular schools and form a crucial part of the 'hidden curriculum'.

The view that there is a bias permeating secularist charges against faith based schooling, with respect to negating a child's autonomy, is shared by some Muslim educators. Although this often begins by pointing to the inconsistency described by Grace (2002), it does not end there. If we follow Trevathan and Mears' response to this charge we find a more qualified and nuanced insight than that accompanying the equivalence argument

I'm not arguing that indoctrination doesn't take place here; it's just that it also takes place everywhere else. Secular society continues to see itself outside of dogma and doctrine – but that's ridiculous because it uses both to indoctrinate a system of beliefs and values. Now, there is *reprehensible doctrinarian* and I think that is when the child is not made free to make decisions concerning their own thinking. In the classroom, that would translate into the teacher telling them that such and such is the case and any other argument is false. If the teacher however speaks about something and says that within this understanding there are other views which he or she or 'the Muslims' may not agree with for such and such a reason – then you're presenting the child with a fuller picture (Trevathan, Interview).

All schools are indoctrinating processes, basically, so I think that you need to understand that before asking the question. I think there are stages of education that ought to make your understanding of that process more acute, and I don't think that enough emphasis is given in education to the play aspect, for too many formal learning processes are coming in too early. And I think that's because of the academic success criteria that is quite prevalent amongst the Muslim community, a lot of Muslim schools also try to push the formal learning processes. Also, a non-Muslim parent might say that we want you to educate our child but they are not a Muslim therefore we don't want them to do the prayer. At that point I think the Muslim school will be quite able to say that your child will be there to observe the prayer but they won't be made to do the prayer. Neither would we stop them if they chose to or not. It's an interesting point because we would say that when a child came of age at 14 that they would have the choice anyway, so it wouldn't be relevant whether the parent said yes or no. But we haven't got to that point yet (Mears, Interview).

This then rehearses the objection to viewing non-religious schooling as a neutral enterprise, and simultaneously invites the different and equally broad objection to modes of political integration that try to separate public and private spheres in some civic-national convention (cf Guttman, 1994). The distinction is elaborated upon after a consideration of the relationship between these conceptions of autonomy and conceptions of 'good citizenship'.

## 7.2. *Good citizens*

There is a genuine and problematic tension between espousing a HPG type of radical autonomy argument against religious education whilst, simultaneously, holding the reasonable view that the education process should contribute to the cultivation of future ‘good citizens’. This is epitomised by the states’ interest in ascribing and inculcating liberal or civic virtues, a point famously set out in Rawls’ (1993: 199) formulation:

...political liberalism...will ask that children’s education will include such things as knowledge of their constitutional and civic rights so that, for example, they know that liberty of conscience exists in their society and that apostasy is not a legal crime...Moreover, their education should also prepare them to be fully cooperating members of society and enable them to be self supporting; it should also encourage the political virtues so that they want to honour the fair terms of social cooperation in their relations with the rest of society.

This sort of thinking is evident in the current drive in Britain for ‘citizenship education’ (QCA, 1998), which entails a clear desire to engender a particular ‘civic morality’ amongst young people through imparting knowledge of political functions and historic practices, as one of the opening paragraphs of the Citizenship Education Committee, chaired by Sir Bernard Crick, reports

We aim at no less than a change in the political culture of this country both nationally and locally: for people to think of themselves as active citizens, willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life and with the critical capacities to weigh evidence before speaking and acting; to build on and extend radically to young people the best in existing traditions of community involvement and public service, and to make them individually confident in finding new forms of involvement and action among themselves (Qualifications Curriculum Authority, 1998: paragraph 1.5)

This begs the question, however, as to when the impetus behind wanting to form ‘good’ or ‘active’ citizens will actually conflict with the growing autonomy of the child. To put it another way: “at what point should he or she be free to reject liberalism and make mature, illiberal, choices of his or her own?” (Ahdar and Leigh, 2005: 231). The implication being that to make the objection to faith schools on the basis that they might curtail the child’s autonomy can be inconsistent, given that the inculcation of any sort of civic morality can be subject to the same charge.



In our assessment of Muslim faith schooling, therefore, we should be careful not to stand behind universalistic and perfectionist positions that are overly abstracted from experiential contexts, in advance of looking at the “hard cases” (Favell and Modood, 2003). These offer many examples of academic excellence and fully integrated future citizens within the context of the historically specific schooling compromises discussed earlier. This is view a shared by McLaughlin (1992: 115). who has argued that

Ethical and philosophical reflection must be conducted in relation to this fuller range of complex considerations and not in an abstract way independent of them. It is rash, for example, to condone or condemn certain kinds of separate school solely on grounds of philosophical principle. Much depends on how the institutions actually operate, and what their effects actually are on students and the broader community.

### *7.3. Civic assimilation and the remaking of Muslim constituencies*

This embedded reading of autonomy can be interpreted as a critique of liberal perfectionist thinking that is often too abstracted from the lived relations and real world contexts in which Muslim schools seek to operate. It is an argument made by Parekh (2000: 202-3) when he contests the civic assimilationist approach, based upon a neat separation of public and private spheres, on the grounds that such a view fails to take account of institutions that encompass both

The school educates future citizens, and has a political dimension. However, since children are not just citizens but also human beings and members of the relevant cultural communities, their parents and cultural community have a vital interest in their education, which makes the school a cultural institution that belongs to private or civic realm. If we stressed the former, we would have to treat the school as a public institution subject to the control of the state and ignore parental choices and cultures; if the latter, we would reach the opposite conclusion.

This sort of approach allows for the recognition of other intersecting issues affecting the articulation of Muslim-consciousness in Britain (Roy, 2004; Sayyid, 2002). The shape and impact of these issues are subject to debate, but amongst Muslims in Britain it is evident that there is an attempt to reconfigure what being a Muslim in the West means, and part of this process is linked to the issue of schooling. As Johnson and Casteli (2002: 33) have argued

Islam in the West is itself undergoing a change. As part of this change, Muslim schools are engaged in creating an identity for the school, the students and the larger communities associated with them. Most Muslim schools in England are

multi-ethnic and draw children from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Although mono-faith they portray diverse interpretation of Islam. [...] It would not be an exaggeration to describe their task as developing a kind of English Islam which is new and is finding its way and its identity within this new context.

We find many aspects of this argument, expressed both as a hope and objective, amongst Muslim educators. This has already been demonstrated by Abdulla Trevanthan's view that - if anything – *Islamia School* is about creating a British-Muslim culture<sup>11</sup>. This view fits nicely with Idreas Mears description of the same phenomena that Johnston and Casteli (2002) are trying to capture

I think that what is interesting is that a kind of British Muslim Identity is only just emerging. I think that's basically because the schools and communities were controlled by a framework led by the elder generation and that people still saw themselves as an immigrant minority coming together to protect their culture, and in a sense still relate to another place being home. I would call them English Muslims, Welsh Muslims and Scots Muslims because British still has a sense of being abstract and being a political identity whereas region has much more to do with place and invites the rest of society to say 'yes you're an English Muslim' rather than an Asian Other that is suggested by British Muslim. Then something will have actually changed, both in how the Muslims are viewed but also in how they see themselves... At that point I think the Muslims become much more relevant to general society and we'll start to see some very interesting things happen, I think (Mears, Interview).

This argument returns us to the third issue motivating the desire for Muslim faith schooling. This is linked to the aspiration for more British trained theologians who could discuss theological issues with a contemporary resonance to the lived experiences of being a British-Muslim. It is argued that such developments – if publicly endorsed – could provide opportunities through which Muslim children would be able to confidently negotiate and reconcile the requirements of their faith with their rights and responsibilities as British citizens. This relationship is, therefore, almost dialectical, a view shared by Hussein (2004: 322) who concludes that "Muslim schools are needed so that Muslim youth will be able to

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<sup>11</sup> Basam Elshayyal, a teacher at Islamia School, captures this well when she says that "the faith aspect in schooling is really important. We try to achieve a holistic approach to their lives rather than compartmentalising everything. The ethics and morals permeate the whole attitude of the school. So we teach them that they can be a citizen of the world and a positive contributor in every area of their lives – in the wider world, within their family, with different religious groups" (quoted in CBMI, 2004: 52).



comprehend and contextualise Islam in their environment (Britain). Thus, this also requires the Muslim schools to try to achieve a wider British identity.”

## **8. Muslim curriculum objectives and social cohesion**

In support of such a project Ashraf (1990 reproduced in Ameli et al 2005) has outlined a possible curriculum “Faith” framework. Interestingly, he begins by advocating an autonomy argument that seeks to “eschew any form of indoctrination or compulsion to religion” (cited in Ameli et al 2005: 27-8) before distinguishing between two core curriculum aims. The first is concerned with beliefs and values (cognitive and affective respectively), and includes the following priorities

[...] 1.5 Awareness that god has created different racial groups so that we may know each other and live in harmony, respecting the different and differing customs, values, beliefs and languages of the main cultures of the country. [...] 1.6 Awareness that the richness of each community depends on how far it can appreciate and value the achievements of other communities and assimilate them for the benefit of its own existence. 1.8 Development not only of tolerance and concern for the rights and beliefs of others, but a commitment to practical engagement on their behalf on the basis of the awareness that in the eyes of God all have equal rights and are entitled to justice.

Meanwhile, intellectual, emotional and social skills development are addressed in the second curriculum aim

2.1 Nurturing and development of the powers of reasoning, reflective and critical thinking, imagining, feeling and communicating amongst and between persons. 2.2 Learning how to maintain, develop and renew (and not merely preserve) the social, economic and political order on the basis of values that are fundamentally derived from great religious traditions and human practice. 2.3 Cultivation and development of the physical well being of pupils. 2.4 Cultivation and development of the abilities of communicative competence both in spoken and written form and through a number of modes including verbal, numerical, mathematical and artistic. 2.5 Awareness of the interplay of performance and change in the social process so that the roots [...] and] tentative nature of human condition and interaction are also understood. 2.6 Knowledge of modern science and technology and an awareness and a critical understanding of their relationship to socio-cultural ethics [...] 2.7 Mastery of scientific and other skills necessary for work and living in modern society.

It would be beneficial here to explore these ideal type curriculum interests in relation to the concerns over social cohesion and social fragmentation that frequently arise in debate surrounding Muslim schools (see Meer, 2007a; 2006). For example, the HPG (2001) argue

that it is the lack of 'contact' amongst children from different religious backgrounds in separate schools that gives rise to fragmentary social situations

If children grow up within a circumscribed culture, if their friends and peers are mostly from the same religion and hence also, very likely from the same ethnic group, and if they rarely meet to learn to live with others from different backgrounds, this is hardly calculated to provide the acceptance and recognition of diversity. We have clear evidence to the contrary in Northern Ireland, where the separation of Catholic Schools and Protestant schools has played a significant part in perpetuating the sectarian divide (HPG, 2001: 35)

Although Catholic schools form an illustrative example here (see Short (2002) and McNichol (1988) for a powerful rebuttal to this example), and whilst the charge of ethnic exclusivism is not empirically tenable in an analysis of Muslim schools - bearing in mind the ethnic heterogeneity in the category of Muslim discussed earlier – the rest of the objection finds resonance in a commonly held view that any emphasis upon religious particularity results in inter-religious hostility. Responding to these charges, the educationist Geoffrey Short (2002: 570), drawing upon empirical work with Jewish faith schools, has argued that, since neutrality as “the pre-requisites of successful contact cannot be guaranteed”, the benefits of mere contact between children “are of limited value, for changes in attitude tend not to generalise [emerge substantively] out of the original contact situation”. This is not an advocacy for apartheid as much as a rebuttal to a commonsense assumption in that. for Short, the relevant consideration is not one of contact “but anti-racist education which can, in principle, be undertaken as effectively in a faith school as in non-denominational one” (ibid). This is evident – if not central – to Ashraf’s (1990) curriculum outline which uses Islamic principles to proactively accord universal dignity and worth, irrespective of ethnic, religious or racial difference.

Both Ashraf (1990) and Short (2002) might be characterised as advocates of Gordon Allport’s (1954) path-breaking work on the social-psychology of racism, which suggests that one of the most effective ways to impart knowledge about people different to oneself is through academic teaching in schools, rather than a naïve *laissez faire* approach which



assumes that mere exposure and *contact* with 'difference' will resolve prejudices. This is reflected in Mears' description

I think the most important thing to note – and I think more of the Muslim schools are realising this – is that Islam is not solely for Muslims. It's for all of mankind. And the role of Muslims is to establish justice and meet the needs of all people, so that Muslim schools are for all children and they're about delivering education... And I think that what's going to happen with the Muslim schools is that as they find their way they will become much more creative in the way that they deliver education. That they will begin to have a significant impact on general education theory and practice in this country, and I'm really excited to see that happen. I think it's going to be a natural growth process, and part of that will actually happen not from the existing teachers but from young people who are brought up in Muslim schools (Mears, Interview).

Mear's optimism may be seen as an development from the first stage solution envisaged thirteen years ago by Shabir Akhtar (1993: 43), who encouraged a type of 'delayed assimilation' into the education system where "a limited amount of isolation" can enable Muslims to "gain the confidence and security...to assimilate on [their] own terms". Akhtar was of course making reference to the historical context of faith-schooling in Britain, and found himself in agreement with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Leeds, David Konstant, who has previously stated that the effect of separate Catholic schools has been integration rather than fragmentation. This, he argued, was because "having our own school within the state system helped us to move out of our initial isolation to become more confident and self assured" (quoted in *The Times*, 1 January 1991).

## 9. Conclusions

### 9.1. Pragmatic Muslim-consciousness

The preceding analysis has explored how a Muslim-consciousness connects to the movement for Muslim schools, and specifically why Muslim minorities are seeking an incorporation and reflection of this Muslim-consciousness within the arena of education. Rather than turning inward, it is argued that the arena of education is witness to this consciousness seeking out new forms of synthesis in negotiating a meaningful and reciprocal British-Muslim identity. An important part of this involves a pursuit for the recognition of identities that are otherwise veiled by a collage of images positioning Muslims in Britain as "Public Enemy Number One

– Britain’s Most Unwanted, as it were” (Alexander, 2000: 14). In trying to shake off these attributions, the mobilisation for Muslim schools marks an important shift in the movement of a consciousness *for* itself: from a community’s historical *ascribed* identity to a political *self-constructed* identity. That Muslim mobilisations are engaging with a range of established educational conventions, norms, regulations and precedents, suggests that, contrary to Charles Taylor’s assumption discussed in chapter two, Muslims in Britain are demonstrating a willingness and ability to proceed through the sorts of multicultural claims-making set out in chapter one. The findings of this chapter call into the question the sorts of exclusivity in predetermined notions of Muslim-incompatibility presented in Taylor’s thesis. In so doing it accentuates a divergence between Taylor and Du Bois’s idea of recognition, since the latter is more genuinely dialogical and does not seek to *a priori* exclude some minority claims-making from the process of politics.

### 9.2. *Impaired civic status?*

It remains, however, as Osama Saeed protests, that the second most populous faith in Britain receives little state recognition in terms of faith schooling provisions. Where Muslim constituencies are granted greater participatory space in the shape of provisions for Muslim schooling, it is evident from the testimonies of Muslim educators that a synthesis between faith requirements and citizenship commitments is a first order priority. This is the key point because it appears increasingly unjust not to afford Muslims in Britain the same ratio of schooling provisions as other faith groups, particularly since this has historically proved to be an effective method of integrating religious minorities throughout the development of the education system in Britain. Is there currency then in Merali’s charge that Muslims are subject to an impaired enjoyment of a civic status, and that this is partly due to being perceived in certain sorts of negative ways?



### *9.3. Islamophobia and the security agenda*

The fall-out from the current security agenda described at the very beginning of this thesis is difficult to ignore, specifically in the conception of Muslims and Islam through the discourses captured by the Runnymede Trust's (1997, 2004) catalogue of pernicious stereotypes surveyed in chapter three and chapter four. These include descriptions of Muslims as irrational, primitive, sexist, violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism and engaged in a 'clash of civilisations', so much so that the prospect of affording Muslim minorities faith schooling provisions would risk encouraging and further cementing these values and behaviours. Arzu Merali suspects that it is for these reasons that Muslim schools have been recognised so little and so late, whilst Tahir Alam sees the situation more in terms of broader issues, including the relative newness of Muslim communities in Britain, though he equally displays an awareness of external perceptions shaping the terms of Muslim minority success

I think unfortunately, in the public arena and particularly in the media discourse, we're not beyond that... I think sadly, this sort of spectre of segregated, Muslims hating the rest of the world remains out there at the moment and Muslim schools with being flagged up in creating these monsters or fifth-columnists in British society. So, even now we'll have Muslim schools with real resources rather than scrapping around for the funding that others have, this is still going to be this huge question mark around them in the public arena – I don't see that going away (Merali, Interview).

You have to remember that the Muslim community is a very recent community in this country, we're a very young community, but I think the participation levels within the last five years...and the vibrancy of participation has been very encouraging... There's a lot of work to be done of course, and this is the challenging situation that we find ourselves in. That we are under higher scrutiny than other communities, and how we respond to that and change wider society's perceptions perhaps will be essential to how the Muslim community develops. (Alam, Interview).

### *9.4 Conclusion*

All of the themes of political and personal commitment, of striving for self knowledge and a sense of self, and of the essential material and moral conditions necessary for self realisation that inform a Du Boisian conception of consciousness are apparent in the preceding discussion, and return us to the typology set out in chapter two. Ansari (2004: 14)

convincingly captures this broad feeling of being dispossessed, much of which has to do with a sense of powerlessness and political impotence

Since the power to decide policy, distribute resources and arrange the various affairs of society rest with the majority community, Muslims have suffered disadvantage and exclusion, and consequently their identity has been shaped by negative interactions with this society.

Moreover, and having engaged with some of the main sociological and philosophical currents at work in the debate surrounding Muslim schooling in Britain, the preceding discussion advocates a more contextual sensitivity in recognising the scope for multiple and/or simultaneously valid accounts of autonomy presented in Muslim curriculum objectives and their implications for social cohesion. This simultaneously contains the Du Boisian prescription that we must recognise and value differences in order to achieve unities. These issues are further developed in a concluding typology set out in the following chapter.



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## Chapter Seven

### Conclusions

#### 1. Is there a Muslim double consciousness and what does this mean?

This thesis has aimed to make both a theoretical and empirical contribution to the study of Muslims and multiculturalism in Britain. It has approached this through asking how Muslim-consciousness connects to the sorts of civic status that Muslims in Britain are seeking, compared to that they are currently afforded, and how accounts of minority consciousness gleaned from the work of W. E. B. Du Bois can elucidate our understanding of this. This has necessarily included reference to the types of civic status that have prevailed for other minorities under the terms of a peculiarly incremental, and often precedent-based, British multicultural tradition. This is a tradition that is metaphorically counterpoised – in Roy Jenkins’ famous words - to “a flattening process of assimilation”, and which has raised expectations of equal treatment derived from the actual process of managing diversity rather than a substantive assumption of sameness.

These issues were theoretically set out in chapters one, two and three, and then empirically pursued through multi-method case studies examining salient Muslim mobilisations for legislation to protect Muslims from discrimination, in chapter five, and the state funding of Muslim schools, in chapter six. The thesis has argued that a focus upon Muslim-consciousness, alongside a reflection on the ways this consciousness is understood politically and discursively, through the public and media commentary that was examined in chapter four, allows us to capture the interaction between agency and structure. This enables us to observe the operation of at least two types of consciousness: one that exists *in* itself and one that exists *for* itself.

This thesis has sought to retrieve this distinction from the ideas W. E. B. Du Bois. Thus chapter two teased out the layered distinctions and implications of these two kinds of consciousness to show the way in which Du Bois, unlike Hegel and some later multiculturalists, recognised the manner in which coercion could be a partner or competitor in



processes of inter-subjective recognition. Du Bois' work demonstrates how and why these interactions impact upon the kinds of self-consciousness (in itself and for itself) that, consequently, emerge and develop. Indeed, it was argued that Du Bois' ideas prove invaluable in capturing the dual character of unrecognised minority subjectivities and their transformative potential, as well as the conditions of impaired civic status that are sometimes allocated to minorities by mainstream society.

In chapters five and six these distinctions were adopted in the conceptualisation of Muslim mobilisations-as-consciousness as witnessed in (i) anti-discrimination and (ii) educational claims-making, through the *explicit* projection of Muslim group identities examined in chapter three. To justify this, chapter three mapped the movement from a historically ascribed identity toward a politically self-constructed identity - as the emergence of a self-consciousness for *itself* - by tracing the adoption and projection of the Muslim identities embodied within this movement. Through a focus upon their form, their content, and how they might be contrasted with other minority identity mobilisations within the British political context, it showed that Muslim identities have emerged relatively recently, through, and sometimes in opposition to, British race and ethnicity thinking. The implications of this became paramount in the ensuing chapters, from which four main types of Muslim-consciousness might be deciphered. Whilst in truth there is overlap and interaction between each kind, it is argued that enough consistency exists in their form and content to delineate the following four tendencies that move progressively outward. This outward movement is taken to reflect the Du Bosian characterisation of the development of a minority consciousness from being *in* itself (as 'impaired' and 'reactive') to a minority consciousness that is *for* itself (as 'pragmatic' and potentially 'synthesized').

### 1.1. *Impaired Muslim-consciousness*

As chapter two illustrated, the manner in which minorities are publicly represented is integral to Du Bois' account of double-consciousness, through his discussion of the *veil* and the construction of the *self*. That external narratives on minority identity impinge upon the

sorts of consciousness minorities experience is a view captured in his protest that, “our worst side has been so shamelessly emphasised that we are denying that we ever had a worst side [so that] in all sorts of ways we are hemmed in” (Du Bois, 1999 [1903]: 127). This is why he encourages the cultivation of a positive public representation of minorities, so that they can transcend the ‘peculiar sensation’ that they are indeed ‘a problem’. For these reasons, chapter four argued that the wave of negative public and media discourses concerning Muslims in Britain that has recently emerged can impair how Muslims see themselves reflected back. In an example of a *reactive* Muslim-consciousness, this has informed the increasing tendency for Muslims to represent themselves through a proliferation of Muslim media sources that are seeking to provide alternative perspectives from, and thereby pluralise, the mainstream.

### 1.2 *Reactive Muslim-consciousness*

Reporting on the second of three case studies, chapter five extended this analysis to the arena of anti-discrimination formulae that, alongside education, are considered to be a cornerstone of the sorts of British multicultural citizenship (and the civic status this confers) surveyed in chapter one. By applying the discussion of cultural racism and Islamophobia elaborated earlier, particularly in chapter three, the ways in which these racisms are or are not recognised within current anti-discrimination protections were examined in chapter five. This proceeded through a genealogy of anti-discrimination legislation to show how we have reached where we are; to what extent the current situation works differently for different groups, and where Muslims are positioned within this. It was argued that, in rejecting a normative grammar of race through an acceptance that legal categories of race and ethnicity must not be foreclosed to the complexities of social contingencies (including periods of Muslim racialisation), a coherent argument for Muslim inclusion under existing anti-discrimination formulae could be made. The fact that Muslim bodies, such as the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC), are increasingly materially supporting cases where the claimant is not assisted by the CRE *because* the complaint concerns anti-Muslim



discrimination, indicates the way in which a Muslim-consciousness *for itself* is emerging to engage and challenge established policy orthodoxies.

### 1.3. *Pragmatic Muslim-consciousness*

In reporting on the last of three case studies, chapter six examined the relationship between Muslim-consciousness and Muslim mobilisations for Muslim schools in an attempt to problematise an increasingly salient articulation of Muslim identity. Due to the significant interaction that is required between Muslim parents, Muslim educators, local education authorities and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in the creation, operation and monitoring of Muslim schools, this was an ideal case through which to examine the emergence and meaning of Muslim-consciousness. The inquiry focused upon priorities within and amongst British-Muslim communities themselves but also considered the way that these have been understood at an official level. It concluded that the impulse for Muslim schools is located squarely in the Du Boisian tradition set out in chapter two, and that an incorporation and reflection of Muslim-consciousness in education can prevent Muslim-consciousness from turning inward, by instead striving outward in synthesis as a meaningful and reciprocal British-Muslim identity.

### 1.4. *Synthesized Muslim-consciousness?*

A potential fourth type of Muslim-consciousness may be found in a synthesised or hyphenated identity. As chapter two outlined, Du Bois' discussion of different sets of 'strivings' were quite distinct from the potentially debilitating effects of earlier types of double consciousness, since they began with a resource and achieved a new synthesis. In drawing upon Hegelian phenomenology, it could be argued that Du Bois concluded that the fate and consciousness of different parties within a polity would necessarily become *interdependent*, or inextricably linked, in a process that meant they would effectively have to 'sink or swim' together. Similarly, one of the conclusions of this thesis is that precisely this predicament currently faces Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain. At what point, if at all,

will the emergence of a Muslim-consciousness be recognised as a legitimate constituent of British citizenship? And at what cost will Muslim constituencies be denied a participatory space in the form of provisions for Muslim schooling, discrimination legislation, and non-derogatory representation in mainstream public and media discourses?

Through the cases elaborated in this thesis, it is evident that there is a movement for some sort of synthesis by Muslims themselves. Britain boasts a public sphere that has historically included and incorporated other religious minorities. The question with which it is currently faced, is can it accommodate Muslims in a manner that will allow them to reconcile their faith commitments with their citizenship requirements?

## **2. The emergence of 'radical Muslim-consciousness' as a new research agenda?**

As the hitherto four fold typology re-establishes, the thesis has almost entirely focused upon mainstream Muslim communities seeking inclusion in the public sphere, an inquiry that has proceeded through an explicit concern with the domestic, and not international, agendas. Having established this, it is important to recognise the ways in which newer political issues are shaping social science research agendas vis-à-vis Muslims in Britain. One example concerns the way in which there currently appears to be a re-orientation in the interest in Muslim-consciousness, a shift that is focused through a securitised lens that is no longer limited to the domestic agenda. It is perhaps appropriate to conclude this thesis by commenting on the content of this shift, and noting the extent to which it has arguably been precipitated by the London bombings of 7 July 2005, and other terrorist related incidents involving British Muslims.

A potentially illustrative example of the current re-orientation can be found in Ed Hussain's (2007) recent account, *The Islamist: Why I Joined Radical Islam in Britain, What I Saw Inside and Why I Left*. Hussain's biographically-led arguments concern the nature of some Muslim identities, specifically their alleged 'radical' (anti-western) and ambitious (proselytising) content, which indicates that the topic areas which this thesis has primarily focused upon are no longer the only salient issues concerning Muslim identities in



contemporary British politics and society. This portrayal of a Muslim-consciousness that, to a large extent, emerges outside of the issues that have been examined here, has been warmly received by commentators,<sup>1</sup> and suggests that an inquiry into 'radical Islam'<sup>2</sup> must form part of any contemporary or emerging research agenda on Muslims in Britain.

To date, however, there is very little credible academic research that explores organisations such as *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* and the other fringe movements that Hussain chronicles in his populist and contested account (Butt, 2007). Nevertheless, several very recent exceptions to this general trend testify to the interest in what might be described as the emergence of 'radical Muslim-consciousness', as a contemporary research agenda, as well as the problematic nature of such inquiry.

The first and most sympathetic can be found in Tahir Abbas' (2007) edited volume entitled *Islamic Political Radicalism: A European Perspective*. In it Abbas argues that "the communities from which many radicals emanate are generally removed from formally engaging in the political process" (pg, 4) and that "by giving them [Muslims] a sense of belonging, identity, or association with a struggle that transcends their everyday boundaries and barriers...Islamists have moved in with a twisted message of salvation and redemption" (pg, 17). This of course assumes a degree of naiveté and/or susceptibility amongst some sections of Muslim communities, given the ease with which they are apparently being led astray by Machiavellian Muslim figures. As such Abbas fails to offer either a sociologically or politically convincing comprehension of what a 'radical Muslim-consciousness' might entail and, arguably, proceeds from a confused, under-developed and fatalistic social psychology of Muslim identities per se. This is illustrated by the following paragraph in which Abbas (2007: 9) concludes that "young Muslim individuals experiencing acute social exclusion and faced with multiple challenges and confrontations in relation to religion, culture and society, [find] their only solution is to take a radical Islamic perspective." This of course

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<sup>1</sup> Amongst others, Anushka Asthana (2007) describes Hussein as the "true Islamic voice", whilst Martin Amis (2007) is convinced that his account is the "most accurate portrayal of the dark side of Islam", a view shared by Johann Hari's (2007) conclusion that it is a timely insight into the psychologies of people convinced of the "great gay-Jewish conspiracy".

<sup>2</sup> See chp. 6 sec. 4 for a critique of such terminology.

contradicts the key conceptual innovation of this thesis: that, following Du Bois, we should view forms of Muslim-consciousness, in all their variety, as representing developments of consciousness *in* and *for* themselves, in a way that does not solely attribute or reduce identifications to ascribed or imposed categorisations that deny Muslim agency.

Whilst Abbas underplays the potential fruition of consciousness *in* and *for* itself, in the manner elaborated throughout this thesis, it is neither satisfactory that, in an indication of the novelty of this area, other alarmist and even less nuanced contributions and interventions over-emphasise the scope and prevalence of a 'radical Muslim-consciousness'. For example, whilst the unscholarly accounts of Michael Gove's (2006) *Celsius 7/7* and Melanie Phillips' (2006) *Londonistan: How Britain created a terror state within* have received much attention in public and media discourse, a recent - and more sociologically competent - report from the Policy Exchange (2007: 32) has legitimised a view that a 'radical Muslim-consciousness' has emerged from "a deeper yearning" for identity held amongst "many British Muslims". According to the report's authors, this is because "older forms of political and national identity have come under attack or have diminished." That means, the authors contend, that the growth of "Islamism in the UK over the past two decades has been encouraged by...official policies."<sup>3</sup>

Amongst the policies lamented by the authors include those that have facilitated the move to devolved or regional assemblies, alongside anti-racist education programmes and equal opportunities legislation, with no clear rationale or distinction to support their assertions. As such, their analysis amounts to an overly deterministic account which avoids asking the simple, but important, question: if, as the authors claim, multiculturalist policy and other identity related politics discourses play a role in the 'radicalisation' process, could the recognition of Muslim identity not also be an important tool to deterring or alleviating radicalisation? For, it is equally plausible that the public affirmation of a mainstream Muslim-consciousness, that has access to equitable education and protection from

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<sup>3</sup> For a critical comment on this report see Smyth and Gunning (2007).



discrimination, could stifle the expansion of the sorts of 'radical' consciousness feared by the Policy Exchange and others.

It is the argument of this thesis that this outcome is not only plausible and desirable, but is also, in fact, most likely. Indeed, some of the most convincing and nuanced research that is emerging on 'radical Muslim-consciousness' supports this. For example, in his interim submission to the Department for Communities and Local Governments (DfLG), entitled *The Role of Muslim Identity Politics in Radicalisation (a study in progress)*, Tufayal Choudry (2007: 21-2) sets out a five point summary. This incorporates both the individualistic and social-psychological concerns pertaining to the emergence of a radical Muslim consciousness. Choudry's conclusions are drawn without ignoring the sociological and political dimensions of their emergence and, consequently, are worth quoting at length

*First*, the path to radicalisation often involves a search for identity at a moment of crisis. Whilst defining oneself is part of the normal process of identity formation among young people, for those who are at risk of violent radicalisation, this process creates a 'cognitive opening', a moment when previous explanations and belief systems are found to be inadequate in explaining an individual's experience. *Second*, underlying the identity crisis is a sense of not being accepted or belonging to society. The intensity of such feelings is reinforced by experiences of discrimination and racism, a sense of blocked social mobility; and a lack of confidence in the British political system. *Third*, as part of this process individuals seek to construct a sense of what it means to be Muslim in Britain today. The appeal of extremist groups reflects, in part, the failure of traditional religious institutions and organisations to connect with young people and address their questions and concerns. *Fourth*, a lack of religious literacy and education appears to be a common feature among those that are drawn to such groups. The most vulnerable are those who are religious novices exploring their faith for the first time. *Fifth*, the discourse of 'British-Islam' is emerging as a powerful response to 'radical Islam'.

It is on the last point that I would like to end this thesis. On the emergence of a hyphenated Muslim-consciousness achieved in a new synthesis that, for Du Bois, heralded a solution that could be re-configured in on-going contestations of citizenship and civic status. This, believed Du Bois, would allow minorities to eschew the peculiar sensation that they are 'a problem', and instead allow them to see their 'strivings' incorporated into mainstream society and politics in a way that would herald reciprocity and mutual respect. What is preferred here, therefore, is a nationally framed focus, albeit with open boundaries, that does not, in advance, analytically advance or preclude social or political phenomena as they impact upon it. As the thesis has demonstrated, this means that a focus upon Muslim-identity and mobilisations

through a national focus has been the most appropriate approach in capturing the meaning and operation of contemporary Muslim-consciousness in Britain, and the at least five types of which this concluding chapter has typologised. As such, this contribution has sought to make inroads into to our understanding of Muslim-consciousness in Britain, with the view that the contribution this thesis makes can be developed further in future inquiry.

THE END



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# Appendix I

The population of Great Britain by Ethnic group and religion

	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Any other religion	No religion	Not stated	Total
All ethnic groups	71.82	0.26	0.98	0.47	2.78	0.59	0.28	15.05	7.76	100.00
White	75.50	0.11	0.01	0.49	0.35	0.01	0.24	15.54	7.73	100.00
British/Scottish	75.72	0.10	0.01	0.45	0.13	0.01	0.23	15.66	7.69	100.00
Irish	85.68	0.17	0.02	0.17	0.13	0.02	0.26	6.16	7.39	100.00
Other White	62.93	0.32	0.09	2.33	8.27	0.04	0.58	16.06	9.39	100.00
Mixed	52.33	0.71	0.86	0.47	9.73	0.42	0.59	23.34	11.55	100.00
Asian, Asian British/Scottish	4.09	0.61	23.14	0.08	50.37	13.86	0.90	1.42	5.53	100.00
Indian	4.96	0.18	44.82	0.06	12.60	29.20	1.73	1.79	4.65	100.00
Pakistani	1.12	0.03	0.08	0.05	91.90	0.05	0.05	0.56	6.17	100.00
Bangladeshi	0.52	0.06	0.61	0.04	92.42	0.04	0.01	0.45	5.84	100.00
Other Asian	13.46	4.83	26.34	0.30	37.48	6.16	0.95	3.55	6.92	100.00
Black, Black British/Scottish	71.04	0.13	0.26	0.08	9.36	0.06	0.44	7.58	11.06	100.00
Black Caribbean	73.73	0.17	0.29	0.10	0.79	0.03	0.59	11.25	13.04	100.00
Black African	68.80	0.07	0.21	0.05	20.03	0.09	0.22	2.37	8.17	100.00
Other Black	66.48	0.20	0.36	0.14	6.00	0.07	0.65	12.15	13.95	100.00
Chinese, other ethnic group	26.79	15.22	0.67	0.54	12.79	0.51	0.70	34.09	8.68	100.00
Chinese	21.12	15.13	0.07	0.05	0.33	0.04	0.51	53.00	9.75	100.00
Any other ethnic group	32.81	15.32	1.31	1.06	26.02	1.00	0.91	14.02	7.54	100.00
All non-White groups	30.07	2.00	11.91	0.18	30.42	7.11	0.72	9.49	8.10	100.00

Source: 2001 census, Office for National Statistics; 2001 census, General Register Office for Scotland



## Appendix II

### The population of Great Britain by Ethnic group and region

	North East	North West	Yorkshire and Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East	London	South East	South West	England	Wales	England & Wales	Scotland	Great Britain
All ethnic groups	2,515	6,730	4,965	4,172	5,267	5,388	7,172	8,001	4,928	49,139	2,903	52,042	5,062	57,104
White														
British /Scottish	2,426	6,203	4,551	3,808	4,538	4,927	4,288	7,305	4,702	42,747	2,787	45,534	4,833	50,366
Irish	9	77	33	35	73	61	220	82	32	624	18	642	49	691
Other White	21	75	57	57	63	136	595	222	81	1,308	37	1,345	78	1,423
Mixed	12	63	45	43	73	58	226	86	37	643	18	661	13	674
Asian, Asian British/Scottish	34	230	222	169	386	122	867	187	33	2,010	25	2,274	55	2,329
Indian	10	72	51	122	179	51	437	89	16	1,029	8	1,037	15	1,052
Pakistani	14	117	146	28	155	39	143	59	7	707	8	715	32	747
Bangladeshi	6	26	12	7	31	19	154	15	5	275	5	281	2	283
Other Asian	3	15	12	12	21	13	133	24	5	238	3	241	6	247
Black, Black British/Scottish	4	42	34	39	104	48	783	57	21	1,133	7	1,140	8	1,148
Black Caribbean	1	20	21	27	82	26	344	27	12	561	3	564	2	566
Black African	3	16	10	9	12	17	379	25	6	476	4	480	5	485
Other Black	0**	5	3	4	10	5	60	5	2	95	1	96	1	97
Chinese, other ethnic groups	10	40	22	20	30	35	193	62	22	435	11	447	26	473
Chinese	6	27	12	13	16	20	80	33	13	221	6	227	16	243
Any other ethnic group	4	13	9	7	14	15	113	29	9	215	5	220	10	229
All non-White groups	60	374	324	272	593	263	2,069	392	113	4,459	62	4,521	102	4,623

\* All numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand

\*\* There were 427 people from the Other Black group in the North East

Source: 2001 census, Office for National Statistics; 2001 census, General Register Office for Scotland

**Appendix III**



# “GET OFF YOUR KNEES”

## Print media public intellectuals and Muslims in Britain<sup>1</sup>

Nasar Meer

*This article examines perceptions of British-Muslims deployed by “print media public intellectuals” (PMPI). It argues that PMPI embody a particular type of “mediatized intellectual” whose public discourse on Muslims is crucial in determining how issues emerging from the politics of multiculturalism are understood. Adopting a “theory of argumentation” (Richardson, 2001) derived from a critical discourse analysis methodology (CDA), it investigates the political content of messages disseminated by (1) conservative nationalist and (2) secular liberal PMPI through their newspaper opinion columns. The findings suggest that PMPI argumentation ranges from an overt hostility to a qualified discrimination (the former through exclusive accounts of belonging and the latter through a combative/civilising liberalism), and that—moreover—there is a convergence between these two positions in their anti-Muslim sentiment and desire to regulate the lives of ethnic Others (Hage, 1998). There are four parts to this article: the first part outlines what a public intellectual is and where PMPI stand in relation to this; the second part discusses some Muslim attempts to elicit forms of recognition from the state under a rubric of multiculturalism; the third part outlines the chosen CDA schema of analyses and PMPI output; and the fourth part concludes by encouraging us to recognise and examine further the importance of PMPI argumentation in public discourse.*

**KEYWORDS** Discourse analysis; Foucault; journalists; multiculturalism; Muslims; print-media; public intellectuals

### Introduction

The pious counterposition of good or unavoidable ethnocentrism against regrettable but exceptional racism, is an empty charade favoured by those who evade and mystify the moral and political responsibilities that fall to critical commentators in this most difficult of areas. (Gilroy, 2000)

At bottom, the intellectual in my sense of the word, is . . . someone whose whole being is staked on a sense of being unwilling to accept easy formulas, or ready made clichés, or the smooth ever-so-accommodating conformations of what the powerful or conventional have to say and what they do. (Said, 1994)

Through a series of newspaper articles challenging the idea of “Islamophobia”, the *Guardian* columnist Polly Toynbee echoes a chorus of print media journalists who share her protest that “these days criticising any aspect of Islam risks landing you down among the racists” (Toynbee, 2004d). This is particularly worrying because British Muslims “still too rarely speak out against terror” and “excuse, rather than refute, the many ferocious verses calling for the blood of infidels in their holy book—verses that justify terror”

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(Toynbee, 2004d). Her standpoint locates her amongst some illustrious company. The former *Observer* editor, current columnist and eminent political economist Will Hutton, for example, is eager to condemn a pervasive “Islamic sexism—whether it be arranged marriages, headscarves, limiting career options” or “female circumcision” to which we “cannot give ground in the name of multiculturalism” (Hutton, 2004a). Along with other prominent print media journalists, both Toynbee and Hutton fear that Muslims are currently at odds with something integral to life in Britain, if not with modernity itself.

Two immediate points of concern emerge from these comments and are worth addressing at the outset. The first is that anti-Muslim racism or “Islamophobia” should not be characterised as fictional charges designed to obstruct critical engagement with interpretations of Islam. Islamophobia incorporates a documented interaction of traditional and cultural racisms with a historical dimension that is often drawn upon in popular discussion (Runnymede Trust, 1997). The second is that each writer has mischaracterised both Islam and multiculturalism, respectively (these points are developed below).

As a result of the first two concerns, however, there emerges a third and equally pressing issue: if the absolute worst side of an already racialised minority is continually exhorted under a banner of free speech the outcome—rather than aiding its cessation—will be to intensify processes of racialisation through sanctioning such discourse as credible. This, naturally, will make the minority group more defensive and less willing to accept legitimate criticism where it exists, they will effectively “be hemmed in on all sides” (Du Bois, 1978, p. 222). These concerns help frame the focus of the proceeding analysis upon print media journalists who are, as the opening lines from Paul Gilroy might imply, important commentators integral to this process.

### **Who and What are Print Media Public Intellectuals?**

This article is focused explicitly on the print media as the source of a vast array of public information available to local, national and international audiences, and is consumed within and between a host of social cleavages marked by class, gender and ethnicity differentials amongst others (Husband, 2000). From such an understanding, it is reasonable to suggest that an analysis of print media content might reveal something valuable about common beliefs and underlying value systems, and represent one means of studying a society itself (McQuail, 1994).

As producers of content in this medium, there exist a number of influential print media journalists with an authority that stems from both their ability to reflect certain aspects or segments of society, whilst simultaneously raising public awareness of particular issues and events; setting agendas for public discussion and influencing (directly or indirectly) public opinion. As a result, we might begin to characterise some of these journalists as public intellectuals, as print media public intellectuals (PMPI), particularly those with an acknowledged expertise across a diverse range of topics upon which they choose to comment, an expertise that is drawn upon to frame discussions or messages.<sup>2</sup>



### *PMPI and Public Intellectuals*

Paradoxically there is at present a wealth of literature lamenting the "decline" of the public intellectual (Molnar, 1994; Posner, 2001), anti-intellectualism (Hofstadter, 1973; Johnson, 1989) and philistinism (Furedi, 2004). As a cause for anxiety amongst academics and sections of the intelligentsia, particularly when coupled with fears of "dumbing down" (Jacoby, 2000) and cultural populism (Eagleton, 1996), these concerns rarely, if ever, take into account a continuing feature of intellectualism that is signalled in the work of print media journalists, even where there is room for such an analysis amongst established accounts. For example, in describing the emergence of modern intellectuals, Zygmunt Bauman (1987) has sought to contrast "intellectuals as legislators", people usually in the service of state institutions, with "intellectuals as interpreters" who interpret texts, public events or other artefacts by deploying their specialised knowledge to interpret and explain things on behalf of the public. The conception of a print media journalist as an interpreter of—and commentator upon—public events certainly accords with the latter of Bauman's distinctions, and also feeds quite well into Antonio Gramsci's (1973) seminal description of what a "traditional intellectual" looks like, i.e. somebody who occupies an established and structured space or occupation.

### *Print Journalists as "Committed" Intellectuals?*

Making a distinction between "critical" and "functional" public intellectuals, Jean-Paul Sartre (1974, p. 285) argues "the duty of the intellectual is to denounce injustice wherever it occurs", as opposed to merely doing so according to party interests. The implication being that public intellectuals should extrapolate outwards from a universal ethical standard on some issues, whilst conserving their independence by—paradoxically—being publicly "committed" intellectuals in order to comment freely without known constraints.

It is open to debate as to whether PMPI have the autonomy to transcend the party line of their newspaper or its particular editorial.<sup>3</sup> One can certainly think of examples where this has been the case, and although I have already argued that part of the strength of PMPI actually stems from their ability to reflect certain aspects or segments of society, this is simultaneously dependent upon a perception of independence, which inevitably involves some deviation from the norm.

Simultaneously, PMPI can never entirely shake off the responsibilities and restrictions conferred upon them by their employment on a newspaper. Yet it is unclear whether non-print media public intellectuals would gain the necessary exposure through a particular media outlet did they not already suit a particular editorial line, whether they were aware of it or not. Hence we should not dismiss the degrees of autonomy or room for manoeuvre available to PMPI, since it is arguably no less than that afforded to other public intellectuals or "independent" commentators. This observation then adds weight to the significance of PMPI, since *established journalists*—who are the focus of this paper—are afforded legal contracts and a degree of notoriety that arguably reassures them of their occupational position, as well as a regular space in which to articulate their messages.



### *Print Journalists as "Intervening" Intellectuals?*

Complaining that Sartre's notion of a "committed" intellectual represents a fictitious ideal of universality—fighting for universal truths and freedoms, and assuming the task of speaking for humanity as a whole—Michel Foucault (1977) advances the idea of a more specific intellectual who can intervene on the side of the oppressed over particular issues, whilst never claiming to "speak" on the behalf of anybody. Foucault's general concern here is that an adoption of universal positions that necessitate speaking on the behalf of others might actually function to rob them of their already limited agency, i.e. power is exercised over those who are known through discourse, so that those who produce discourse exercise the power to enforce its validity.

To conceive of the intellectual solely in Foucauldian terms, however, is no more helpful than Sartre's conception for our analysis of PMPI. This is because the intellectual "interventions" conceived of by Foucault can surely not stand outside of broader ethical/political conceptions of what is acceptable and what is not; what is good and what is not. There is, however, a Foucauldian position derived from his account of power that can, it will later be argued, be of significant help in this respect.

### *Print Journalists as "Mediating" Intellectuals?*

In a more recent contribution, and one which tries to address the broader task of how we should approach thinking about "the norms of intellectual practice", Thomas Osborne (2004, p. 445) describes the emergence of "the intellectual as *mediator*". This is a type of intellectual who, in addition to Bauman's *legislator* and *interpreter*, contributes ideas that are "meant to get us from one place to another, to move things along" in a "mediatized" performance, such that:

Perhaps such images of "where we're at" or "the state we're in" are just the necessary correlates of the fact that all of us have to orientate ourselves in a mediatized society; one which is traversed by mediations and mediators of a multitude of kinds. It is not simply that we are all necessarily mediators now but that the world itself is imaged through various media, and not least by mediator intellectuals ... (Osborne, 2004, p. 445)

This is an eminently more helpful contribution to any effort to pin down the currency of PMPI argumentation, since it is not a concern with absolutes or dichotomies of roles adopted by intellectuals, but points instead to the possibility that PMPI could be important "mediators" in the diffusion of ideas to a broader public.

It follows that the idea of a PMPI can accord with the definition of a public intellectual when messages serve to cultivate public notions on events, and contribute to the formation of a particular collective consciousness. *The intellectual should then question and scrutinise existing ideas as well as introducing or facilitating newer ones in a public fashion.* It is therefore reasonable to expect PMPI to offer *informed* comment, and—at the very least—an understanding aimed at avoiding stereotypes and unscrutinised conjecture. This is doubly important given their training and ethos as journalists, as well as the fact that they occupy a particularly privileged position as intellectuals, since the dissemination of their messages takes place through an established conduit of influential mass newspaper circulations (including the electronic media).<sup>4</sup>



### PMPI Conservatism, Liberalism and Racism

The presence of Muslims in what we might think of as comprising the "public sphere"<sup>5</sup> in Britain has recently become increasingly conspicuous. Not simply that Muslims have become more "visible" as a minority because of problematising episodes such as September 11, although this inevitably informs part of a broader picture, but rather a growth of what Tariq Modood (1992, 2005) has described as an "ethnic assertiveness" amongst Muslims themselves.

#### *Muslims and the Politics of Identity*

Under a rubric of multiculturalism, this is signalled in the very real attempts to secure forms of "recognition" (Taylor, 1994) from the state. Through collective petitioning or lobbying these include, amongst others, the state funding of religious schools, legislation preventing the incitement to religious hatred, and a greater public recognition of certain faith-related "requirements" so that specific issues can be mediated when they develop, i.e. allowing amendments to uniforms, whether in school or employment, as a reflection of personal modesty derived from religious instruction. At the same time, such an increased emphasis upon what some perceive to be a strategic deployment of religious affiliation by organisations such as the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB),<sup>6</sup> or the notion of a "core" Muslim identity in particular, has proven problematic for both anti-racist (cf. Alexander, 2000; Sivanandan, 1991, 2000) and secular liberal rights-based discourses (cf. Barry, 2001; Chambers, 2002), in addition to objections from conservatives (cf. Scruton, 2004).

Clearly observed during the Rushdie affair, when some Muslims petitioned the state with a request to broaden the remit of its legislation on blasphemy to cover Islam as it does Christianity, they have simultaneously sought to contest assimilatory narratives of "Britishness" by engaging in a debate over a national identity that is invariably symbolised by a Christian mainstream orthodoxy/established Church of England (Modood, 1997).

#### *Liberal and Conservative Responses*

To this the liberal response translates into an antipathy for accommodating beliefs or practices that might be seen to legitimise or perpetuate ethical standards that compromise a number of fundamental rights. These normally include (1) freedom of speech and freedom of expression; (2) the right of group exit (so that group membership should not coerce individual autonomy); (3) the freedom from violence or threat of violence; (4) the equal status of women, including (a) the prohibition of "forced" marriages and (b) an objection to female circumcision<sup>7</sup> amongst others. From a conservative perspective, it involves prioritising the continuity of historically grounded or imagined national ideals and customs. This typically includes (1) recognising and consolidating the monarchical-constitutional link evident in the established church; (2) identifying a core "majority" national identity to which minorities are required to assimilate; (3) contesting allocations of public provisions for minority cultural practices; (4) minimising governmental or legislative interventions recognising the diversity of minority populations.

The PMPI examined in this article (identified in Table 1) are chosen for being broadly representative of these secular liberal and conservative nationalist camps, and within this they were selected because of the saliency of their notoriety in the public imagination.

TABLE 1  
Print media public intellectuals

Newspaper	Strong conservative nationalist	Weaker conservative nationalist	Strong secular liberal	Weaker secular liberal
<i>The Telegraph</i>	Charles Moore Kevin Myers			
<i>The Daily Mail</i>	Melanie Phillips Simon Heffer			
<i>The Times</i>	Anthony Browne Michael Buleigh	Michael Grove	Matthew Parris	
<i>The Observer</i>			Will Hutton	
<i>The Guardian</i>			Polly Toynbee Nick Cohen	David Aranovitch

This is obviously impossible to measure in any scientific sense, but since this is a discursive rather than quantitative exploration, the chosen sample was deemed satisfactory.

*“White Fantasies” of Ethnic Others*

It is my contention that the above PMPI engage in a discussion about Muslims by deriving a “bottom line” approach. This is an understanding that goes something like this. Since both camps are too often deterred from encroaching upon issues of “difference” in fear of the charge of cultural intolerance, what must be preserved—in the name of the Enlightenment, modernity and occidental progress of the last 200 years—are certain thresholds or touchstones of political liberalism and political conservatism. These must neither be crossed nor compromised in fear of encouraging the thin end of a culturally relativist wedge.

This assertion becomes progressively more contentious because I would like to argue that secular liberal PMPI share with conservative nationalist PMPI a series of assumptions that underpin their commentary on Muslims in Britain. These assumptions are based upon what Paul Gilroy (1987) once called “ethnic absolutism”, and what we might think of as an exclusive national space. That is that the platform of Britishness to which they subscribe is both exclusionary and intransigent. By this I refer to what Hage has described as:

... practises which assume, first an image of a national space; secondly, an image of the nationalist himself or herself as master of this national space and, thirdly, an image of the ethnic/racial “other” as a mere object within this space. (Hage, 1998, p. 28)

This is important because (1) it helps inform and sustain “the white fantasy” (Hage, 1998) that PMPI have the right to intervene and regulate the lives of ethnic Others, whilst (2) cementing the myth that it is *the presence* of these ethnic Others—rather than broader societal discourses—that perpetuates racism.

It would be easy here to suggest that this closed national space allows Muslims to become a target by proxy in the way that, in his most recent book, Gilroy (2004) has argued that members of the black diaspora become the floating signifiers of a post-colonial melancholia in Britain (and by that a constant reminder of its status as a defeated empire). There is, however, more to PMPI responses than this, specifically in the way that ideas of political liberalism and conservative nationalism are deployed as a resolute



defence against unacceptable conventions, epitomised by the way that Brian Barry (2001) has recently expounded secular liberalism as an “uncompromising fighting creed” and Roger Scruton (2004) has sought to “retrieve” accounts of British national identity before placing them beyond renewal.

### *Topai Under Analysis*

It is in this context that the argumentation of PMPI forms, in itself, a subject important to the “challenges” posed by Muslims in Britain because journalistic output “is simultaneously constitutive of [the] social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief” (Wodak, 1995, cited in Richardson, 2001) of the more empowered sections of society. I cannot overstate how important this last point is to ensuing debates surrounding Muslims and multiculturalism. This is because, as Favell and Modood (2003, p. 493) have argued, academics and policy makers too often “rely on the unchallenged reproduction of anecdotal facts usually taken from newspapers” which fail to do justice to the complexity of “hard cases”, and encourage a conflation between fact and fiction.<sup>8</sup> For these reasons the analysis presented in the results focuses explicitly upon how Muslims, multiculturalism and accounts of nationhood are presented both in general terms, through rhetoric, and how they are presented in specific terms, through example. This ranges from how multiculturalism is conceptualised by PMPI in general terms, to more specific details informing assumptions about funding for faith schools and proposed legislation preventing incitement to religious hatred.

### **Methods and Methodology**

With this in mind, discourse analysis was used to examine the systems of knowledge and beliefs reproduced in PMPI commentary. As a research method, discourse analysis can mean a range of things that emphasise an examination of the ways that text and “talk” contribute to particular modes of understanding our social world (Silverman, 2000).

### *Foucauldian Knowledge/Power*

Influenced by Foucault’s concern to signpost shifts in moral, ethical and, ultimately, historical notions of legitimising power or authority (keenly observed by Foucault as being exercised in conceptions of “madness”, “sexuality”, “punishment” etc.), discourse analysis is useful in highlighting the degree to which the conditions behind a specific “problem” lie in its textual assumptions. Hence, it might provide an awareness of less obvious motivations by making us ask ontological and epistemological questions.

This emerges in reading Foucault’s (1979, p. 93) understanding of power, an understanding which urges us to focus an examination of power relations at the level of everyday life, rather than upon an analysis of role of the state or the power of one “class” over another alone. This is outlined in, amongst other places, *The History of Sexuality* where he argues that power emanates from every point in the social field, since it is not a monolithic force, “an institution, and nor a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a given society”. *The implication being that power is exercised unseen amongst dominant discourses or modes of knowledge, which reinforce particular perceptions and understandings, inform*

*norms, and re-assure values.* This is the overriding understanding that I would like to extract from Foucault's account during our analysis of PMPI. Although one might not agree with this interpretation and, amongst other things, the patent denial of structure in Foucault's account of power (Fraser, 1989; Harstock, 1990), particularly as a coercive force (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 1993), it is important to recognise the value of his insight not as a teleological theory, but as a sort of "toolkit" (as Foucault, 1980, p. 145, himself stressed).

### *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Argumentation Strategies*

Using this toolkit to focus upon what we can think of as the argumentation strategies evident in the print media, it is argued, can help illuminate the political content and implications of PMPI argumentation in an informative and comparable manner. Drawing upon his extensive analysis of argumentative discourse on "race" in reader's letters, John Richardson has argued that unpacking argumentation reveals

... the structured and directed manner in which texts achieve their persuasive goal(s)—in essence, their dialectic and pragmatic aspects—are of central importance in evaluating the power of argumentative dialogue, made all the more so when we acknowledge the *discursive* potential of texts to modify power relations in other fields. (Richardson, 2001, pp. 144–5)

A feat achieved through three broad and interdependent strategies of public argumentation:

- Firstly, there's the "topical potential" where "speakers or writers choose the material they find easiest to handle" (Richardson, 2001) and, often in doing so, mischaracterise and present a selective or preferred readings of an argument, corresponding to established or dominant discourse. This, naturally, also refers to what is omitted from the discussion.
- Secondly, there's the strategy of adapting to "audience demand" by adopting "a perspective most agreeable to the audience" (Richardson, 2001) because, after all, argumentation aims at "securing the adherence of those to whom it is addressed" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, cited in Richardson, 2001). One example of this is the recourse to the "common sense" of an audience, either through implicit or explicit assumptions, since common sense "is founded upon the unquestioned and unquestionable truths" (Richardson, 2001), and can be linked to assumptions made through tacit knowledge which may, in turn, depend upon (silent) references to particular theoretical paradigms (cf. Kuhn, 1962).
- Thirdly, there are "presentational devices" which "frame their contribution in the most effective wordings" (Van Emerson and Houtlosser, 1999, p. 484). Loaded figures of speech, suggestive definitions or visual images and rhetorical questions are examples of such devices.

### **Findings**

The main strategies drawn of PMPI (identified in Table 1) argumentation became apparent in the following themes or topoi. Where they are numbered this is for ease of reference and—unless otherwise noted—they retain the structure and form of how such arguments were presented when published.



*Muslims and Islam are Anti-modern and Antipathetic to Democratic and Human Rights*

This is a broad but recurring theme, and is epitomised by Will Hutton who, writing in *The Observer*, argues that

1. Islam is predominantly sexist and pre-Enlightenment—
2. and that is the core of the problem
3. both within the Islamic world and in its relationship with the West.
4. Thus, the West has to object to Islamic sexism—
5. whether arranged marriage, headscarves, limiting career options
6. or the more extreme manifestations, female circumcision and stoning women for adultery.
7. We cannot give ground in the name of multiculturalism. [. . .]
8. We should certainly respect diversity, but we cannot abandon or qualify our own beliefs in the process . . .
9. we cannot and should not respond with an unrigorous, soft multiculturalism that pleads such values are equivalent to our own and legitimate within their own cultural context. (Hutton, 2004a)

Hutton's argumentation strategy opens in line 1 with a sentence which functions to simultaneously assume *and* conclude that Islam and "Islamic practices" are predominantly "pre-Enlightenment". The result of this understanding becomes apparent in lines 2, 3 and 4 when seeking to explain "Islam's relationship with the West". The latter is counterpoised as a corrective to pre-Enlightenment exemplars of "Islamic sexism"; practices deemed to cause the problematic nature of Islam's incapacity to relate to a non-sexist, egalitarian West. So for "West" read "Modern". With this in mind, Muslim contributions to a multicultural public sphere in line 7 should be restricted because what Muslim men do to Muslim women is both symptomatic of broader "Islamic practices" and is antipathetic to "our" beliefs in line 8. A combative response is, then, required (line 8) since "their own cultural context" is evidently unable to renew itself without a civilising hand. Such a process necessarily begins by shoring up "our" own values and returns us to the idea of a "bottom line" thinking discussed earlier, which mistakenly positions *all* Muslim practices under a rubric of multiculturalism as necessarily conflicting with liberal freedoms (cf. Barry, 2001).

This is repeated by David Aranovitch, writing in *The Guardian*, over Muslim requests for the granting of public money to Muslim faith schools:

1. What is going on here . . . is an attempt to protect the young from modernity.
2. Parents believe their kids are threatened by the materialism and immorality of other peoples' kids. [. . .]
3. My fear is that this emphasis on faith schooling is an attempt, albeit unconscious—to return us to the days before feminism,
4. an attempt which affects all of us. (Aranovitch, 2004)

In addition to the anti-Enlightenment possibilities outlined by Hutton, Aranovitch draws our attention to a potentially separatist philosophy informing Muslim parents' intentions to send their children to Muslim faith schools in lines 1 and 2. The fact that this is "an unconscious" attempt, suggests (line 3) that there is something pathologically

dysfunctional in the cultural framework and mode of discourse adopted by Muslim parents themselves.

Heralding an argument about Muslim faith schools in general, Aranovitch ignores the more obvious motivations for Muslim parents in choosing to send their children to Muslim faith schools. These might include the educational merits of sending children to schools that, on the basis of examination results, outperform their counterparts in the non-faith sector (Association of Muslim Social Scientists, 2004, p. 33). Although examination results should certainly not be used as the sole yardstick for evaluating education, the academic record of Muslim schools combined with the significantly cheaper tuition fees in comparison to other independent schooling (Association of Muslim Social Scientists, 2004) makes them very appealing to parents who wish to encourage their children to explore their religious heritage. The fact that such concerns are omitted from his reading indicates that the strength of Aranovitch's argument is based more upon assumptions made through implied knowledge, than the empirical reality at hand.

Asking religious peoples to "get off your knees", a similar perception is reiterated by Polly Toynbee of *The Guardian* who, although objecting to faith schools of all religions, argues that Muslims in particular

1. want to keep their children separate,
2. while most parents who choose Christian faith schools do it to help their children get ahead. (Toynbee, 2004c)

Her statement in line 1 is of course a substantive assertion, and one that requires some empirical inquiry in the form of an attitudinal survey of some sort. Since such evidence is neither referred to in her subsequent article, nor known to be available to the author, it would not be unfair to suggest that such speculation on the part of Toynbee serves to mischaracterise and present a selective or preferred reading of an argument, corresponding to established discourses which understand Muslims as "separatist" (cf. Cantle Report, 2002).

### *Conceptualising Multiculturalism*

Islam's anti-Enlightenment implications herald broader consequences for PMPI discussion of multiculturalism in Britain. As a subject topic, multiculturalism is repeatedly framed as heralding a clear "choice" between "integration" and "separatism". Whilst the former is largely understood as "assimilation", so that the terrain of "Britishness" might remain unchanged, the latter is frequently typified by the rhetorical example of "self-segregating communities" in Bradford and elsewhere. This feeds directly into PMPI discussion of a visible Muslim presence in the public sphere, specifically in the way that it challenges cultural hegemonies. For example, Hutton argues that

1. as Westerners respect Islamic mores when in Islam,
2. so the Islamic community has to respect Western mores when in the West. (Hutton, 2004a)

Coupling geography and religion in line 1 (Islam as a place outside of the West), this sentence is based upon the assumption that since "the Islamic community" in the West is largely foreign, it should take to following the good example set by Christians who willingly adapt to the ways of "Islamic mores". This is of course premised upon the



understanding that since Muslims are likely to be inalienably foreign, they should not be thought of as contributing to, let alone comprising, the make-up of "Western mores". This binary "East/West" distinction then, seems essentialist, outmoded and empirically unsustainable given the number of Muslims currently residing in Britain who were born and brought up in the United Kingdom.<sup>9</sup>

Focusing explicitly upon an understanding of cultural difference within multiculturalism, Toynbee makes a distinction between outwardly moving, "humorous" and "inviting" cultural manifestations, on the one hand, and "dangerous", divisive and insular communities emerging under the guise of an ill-fated multiculturalism, on the other:

1. When a generation of Lenny Henry and Meera Syals made it possible
2. to invite others to laugh with them about their own communities, those communities entered into the canon of Britishness. [...]
3. ... the most dangerous divide now is in culture—and that means Muslim.
4. British Muslims arrested last week as terror suspects had families as British as Meera Syal's—yet culturally they inhabit another universe. (Toynbee, 2004b)

The implication being that assimilation (and the disappearance of distinct communities) facilitates an entrance "into the canon of Britishness", whilst maintaining a more distinct Muslim identity is "dangerous" and encourages British-Muslims to "inhabit another universe". This is evidenced by the arrest of "terror suspects". Their subsequent release, however, would do little to facilitate their re-insertion into Toynbee's more acceptable paradigm, since the concern here is more with the perception of a general threat. So great is the perceived threat posed by Muslims in Britain that it "leads" Michael Burleigh of *The Telegraph* to encourage a policy of racial profiling

1. The British people need to be told exactly where that threat comes from,
2. however politically incorrect the answer may be, what concrete measures are being taken to deal with it, and how they themselves can help.
3. [...] our educators should think hard about their failure to inculcate our values, be they religious or secular or a combination of the two in the minds of Britain's very own generation of terrorists. (Burleigh, 2004)

Line 1 reinforces the certainty of a "threat", before political correctness is portrayed in lines 2 and 3 as hampering "the British people" in response to this threat, since it has failed to "inculcate our values" to "Britain's very own generation of terrorists" (line 5). It is interesting that line 4 encourages the inculcation of religious values. Since they are "ours", however, they are unlikely to deviate from those derived from the established church. This passage is helpful in exemplifying the standard conservative nationalist position outlined earlier, as well as the "white fantasy" the PMPI have the right to regulate the lives of ethnic Others.

This enemy within/fifth column has been cultivated under a policy of multiculturalism, which relegates what *The Times* columnist Anthony Browne sees as a historically grounded national identity

1. by stripping Britain of its culture and traditions ...
2. a dangerous rising tide of anger is being caused.
3. This prevents social cohesion and integration ...
4. who could want to integrate into a culture that is committing suicide? (Browne, 2004)

There are two main issues in this apocalyptic vision of an unravelling of the social fabric of Britain. The first is rehearsed in suggestive phrases in lines 1 and 2 reminiscent of Powellite predictions that the continuing presence of ethnic Others will succeed in generating conflict, and the second is that a broader idea of "Britain" will fall away as a result (line 4).

This alarm is shared by Melanie Phillips of *The Daily Mail*, who cites what she describes as a loss of national history as a catalyst for national decline. This history is implicitly tied in line 2 to the continuity of a Christian hegemony where religion is recognised in public life

1. ... it's a desire to create an entirely new kind of society by destroying the old one.
2. That means, among other things, repudiating the Christian basis of British culture.
3. If there simply aren't enough people who can identify with the country's history, then it cannot be taught.
4. And since a nation is rooted in history, its identity then unravels ...
5. there is no longer any sense that there's a 'we' to have a past at all. (Phillips, 2004)

Seeing the rubric of multiculturalism in terms of immigration politics meanwhile, Toynbee offers the example of French responses to the presence of visible Muslims in the public sphere as a necessary task:

1. Yesterday the French banned Islamic schoolgirls from wearing headscarves in a provocative assertion of Frenchness
2. against the perceived threat of alien beliefs. The Belgians are considering following suit.
3. This is an expression of the political pressure over immigration that most European governments feel:
4. if even the tolerant Netherlands can be rocked to its foundation by migration-panic, then no nation is safe.
5. Immigrants may not all be Islamic, but Islam is the most visible and alarming threat from foreigners
6. to hard-won secularism, tolerance, feminism or social democracy. (Toynbee, 2004a)

Conferring the title of "tolerant Netherlands" upon the Dutch in line 4 serves to emphasise the exceptional nature of a Muslim presence to which these "tolerant" governments must necessarily respond. In lines 5 and 6 Islam is described as heralding "the most visible and alarming threat" to ideas of "feminism", "tolerance", "social democracy" and "secularism" which Toynbee believes are interchangeably alien to Islam. The fact that she considers "visibility" an important criteria suggests that there is a racialised element to such a criteria since it is not clear whether a less-visible white Muslim member of the national community presents such a threat. Moreover, lines 1, 2 and 3 mirror the conservative nationalist position concerned with regulating the lives of ethnic Others discussed earlier.

This way of conceiving of Muslims as "foreign" takes us back to Will Hutton's earlier discussion, and is consolidated by the *Daily Mail* columnist Simon Heffer, who argues that:

1. to a few non-Christians,
2. who have chosen to live in this Christian country with its Christian head of state and Christian established church,
3. the display of our majority culture is deemed very offensive indeed. (Heffer, 2004a)



Once more, the sum of “our majority culture” is made up of “Britishness” as “Christian” and *vice versa*. The solution? According to Heffer

1. simply disowning multiculturalism isn't enough.
2. We, as a people, and the Government, must make strenuous efforts to promote and defend our culture,
3. and especially the place of Christianity in it and the rights to self-expression by Christians. (Heffer, 2004a)

In line 2, Heffer's “strenuous efforts” integrate “we, as a people” with the “government” in the defence of “our culture”. This conflation of a common people with a common culture, represented and enshrined in government, is staple conservative thinking. But this determination to “disown” (line 1) multiculturalism is also encouraged by liberal PMPI argumentation, specifically in seeking to catalogue a perceived litany of current failures manifested from misconceived policy in the past.

### *Historic Failures and Current Threats Posed by Multiculturalism*

According to Toynbee, greater “honesty” in these matters is to be commended, as is evidenced in her congratulatory words to the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)<sup>10</sup> chair Trevor Phillips, who

1. breaks with unthinking platitudes about the richness of all diversity in a multicultural society,
2. as if any difference was a self-evident asset.
3. On the day a 17-year old Muslim is charged with conspiracy to cause explosions, it doesn't feel so.
4. Phillips says it was an error to let alien communities stay in their silos. (Toynbee, 2004b)

Multiculturalism is “unthinking” (line 1) according to Toynbee because it encourages “alien communities to stay in their silos” (line 4). This is an important admission because

1. Atrocity will be done in the name of a rogue crazed creed,
2. destroying the infidel for heavenly virgins . . .
3. we are looking into the face of an insane and unassuageable cult.
4. No kind of multiculturalism “understands” this. (Toynbee, 2004b)

So not only are we facing an obvious and immediate threat from a “rogue crazed creed” (line 1), which departs from all recourse to rationality in its masculine insanity—since Islam encourages the “destroying of the infidel for heavenly virgins” (assumedly female, line 2), but we are also threatened by the systemic perversity that

1. Islamic ideas that find the very notion of democracy incompatible with faith
2. are beginning to be taken seriously
3. by those who should defend liberal democracy. (Toynbee, 2004d)

This thin end of the wedge returns to haunt us in the shape of the fears held by *The Telegraph* columnist Charles Moore:

1. Once there are Islamic financial institutions,

2. how long will it be before Muslims insist that the state and business direct all their monetary dealings with Muslims through these institutions (boycotting businesses with Jewish connections en route)?
3. How long before Muslims, extending the logic of their concentration in places like Bradford and Leicester,
4. seek to establish their own law within these areas,
5. the germ of a state within a state? And how diverse would such a state be? (Moore, 2004)

Moore bases his concerns upon two implicit assumptions. Firstly, he perceives Muslims as being intrinsically anti-Semitic so that they will, given the chance, inevitably boycott Jewish businesses (line 2). Secondly, he assumes that there exists a strategic “logic” to the concentration of Muslims in Bradford and Leicester; a separatist logic held by Muslims themselves (lines 3 and 4). The former point is speculative and involves a tacit assumption—since he cites no available evidence upon which he is basing this view—and the latter does not accord with what is known about the pattern of migration and settlement amongst immigrant and post-immigrant groups (cf. Ratcliffe, 1996; Ratcliffe et al., 2001). In addition, Moore invokes the descriptive metaphor of a “germ” (line 5) to mean inception when referring to Muslim intentions. Such terms of reference are historically tied to explicitly racist discourses in the discussion on minority ethnic groups in Britain (cf. Gilroy, 1987)—something inevitably resurrected here in the shape of a virulent multiplication of “Muslim concentrations”.

Adopting a different tact from which to critique the idea of multiculturalism, Simon Heffer makes recourse to an image of the most vulnerable being neglected by the appeasement of minority groups, which inevitably necessitates the redeployment of scarce resources to “politically correct jobs”

1. it is scandalous that, in a society that wastes tax payers’ money by the billion
2. on useless,
3. politically correct jobs and
4. nonessential bureaucrats,
5. money cannot be found to provide dignified and stable
6. care for our elderly. (Heffer, 2004b)

In the space of five lines, Heffer manages to lament multiculturalism as “scandalous”, “useless”, “nonessential” and “wastes tax payers’ money”, whilst a “dignified”, “stable” “care” for “our” elderly is sacrificed. The “billions” lost in this process are not meanwhile accounted for in the rest of his article.

Bizarrely, one of the current threats posed by multiculturalism, according to Melanie Phillips, is evident in the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

... a remarkable report by Greenwich Council produced in response to the murders of Stephen Lawrence and two other local black boys. One of the principal reasons for the murderous rage of white youths, it said, was that they had no national identity to be proud of and to give their lives meaning. White children, it said, “seem like cultural ghosts, haunting as mere absences the richly decorated corridors of multicultural society”. (Phillips, 2004)

Rather than focusing upon a litany of systemic and institutional negligence on the part of the authorities (MacPherson Report, 1999), Phillips draws our attention to one of



the "principal reasons" for "murderous rage" amongst white boys, reasons squarely located at the door of multicultural society.

### *Islam Gets Special Treatment*

Another theme emerging in PMPI discourse is the idea that Islam and Muslims are afforded special treatment at the expense of other beliefs and groups. It is a useful argumentation strategy that sits well with an established complaint that, post-Rushdie, Muslims are incapable of accepting criticism or understanding the appropriate dimensions of satire to which all areas of British social life are subject from time to time. It is invariably encompassed in the assertion that, according to Matthew Parris

...you can get away with verbal aggression towards Christianity which would be considered unacceptable if directed towards Islam. (Parris, 2004)

and is exemplified in Anthony Browne's understanding that

... the BBC's editorial policy bans criticism of the Koran, but not the Bible. (Browne, 2004)

Even though this is *not* an acknowledged BBC policy, it would be perfectly understandable to Toynbee, since

... officialdom is easily frightened of Islam, with good reason. (Toynbee, 2004c)

In similar vein, and complaining that an editorial line in a leading conservative journal was insulting to Christians, Kevin Myers asks

1. can you imagine Britain's Islamic communities—
2. which have provided 1,200 volunteers for training in Taliban camps in Afghanistan—
3. being jeered at in such nasty adolescent tones? (Myers, 2004)

Quite how this figure has been ascertained is not sourced or referred to in the ensuing discussion, but it seems extraordinary. What is less so, however, is the pattern that emerges from the above argumentation. Although Toynbee, as a strong secular liberal, would seek to critique Christianity in a way unacceptable to Kevin Myers, a strong conservative nationalist, both argumentation strategies seek, rhetorically, to position Islam and Muslims as beyond the pale of legitimate critique in fear of conflict or uproar.

The content of this theme feeds seamlessly into PMPI contestation regarding proposed legislation to prevent the incitement to religious hatred, likely to be introduced in the 2005–2006 parliamentary session.<sup>11</sup> What is particularly interesting in PMPI argumentation is that it indicates most clearly upon what issues both political liberalism and conservative nationalism converge when discussing Muslims in Britain.

### *New Legislation Preventing that Incitement to Religious Hatred Will Be Used by Proxy to Defend "Ideas" (Religion) Rather than its Followers*

Simon Heffer argues

1. Muslims are already protected against hatred by the laws that protect us all.
2. All Mr Blunkett would achieve by passing his ridiculous law would be to make certain minorities feel they are special cases.

3. ... the majority in this country who subscribe to a broadly Christian culture
4. would continue to bear the insults from non-Christians and Leftists
5. who hate the nation's traditional values. (Heffer, 2004b)

Reverting to the previous theme whilst re-coupling the link between "Christian culture" and "the nation's traditional values" (line 3), Heffer seeks to assimilate those of no religion to Christianity whilst, ironically, his concerns are endorsed by some of those "Leftists" he seeks to lament. For example, Toynbee argues that

The law will protect the believers, not their beliefs. That difference appears to escape most Muslims. Ministers keep reassuring critics that "only four or five people a year" are likely to be prosecuted in rare cases. If so, then the Muslims who lobbied hard for this law are destined for deep disappointment—and much anger. (Toynbee, 2004e)

The potential insurgency suggested in Toynbee's concerns over "Muslim anger" aside, her anxiety is shared by Simon Heffer. Although located in very different camps, there is some convergence amongst PMPI on this issue, particularly in PMPI conceptions of Muslim motivations for asking for such legislation. Where Muslim lobbyists make the recourse to legislation by citing the lack of publicly responsible discourse, PMPI argumentation interprets this as further indication of Muslim separatism and intolerance of historically British values.

*Not Enough Self-criticism by Muslims Themselves, External Criticism Leads to Charges of Islamophobia*

Fearing that such legislation will consolidate the conceptual understanding of anti-Muslim racism sometimes understood as "Islamophobia", Toynbee suggests that

1. The occasional note of reason from moderate Islamic groups is so weak it hardly makes itself heard.
2. I had challenged the legitimacy of the idea of Islamophobia
3. and warned of the danger to free speech of trying to make criticism of a religion a crime akin to racism.
4. I pointed out yet again that theocracy is lethal.
5. Wherever religion controls politics it drives out tolerance and basic human rights. (Toynbee, 2004d)

There are at least four implicit points in this passage. The first point is that only those deemed as "moderate Muslims" can offer anything resembling "reason", which is why so little in Islam is reasonable given how so few moderates there are to speak out (line 1). This carries the related implication that each Muslim bears the burden of responsibility in representing Islam, so that the failure to speak out confers upon all Muslims the "guilty" actions of a few. This could simultaneously be a weaker statement however, in asking "moderate" Muslims to contest the ground occupied/seized by extremists.

The second point serves to relegate the charge of "Islamophobia" as bogus and illegitimate through a strategy of denial (line 2). This is a consistent position adopted by all PMPI who perceive proposed protections as serving to place religion beyond the point of scrutiny. This is important because PMPI argumentation ignores the complexity of anti-Muslim sentiment in Britain as comprising not a theological objection to Islam, but



heralding a composition of colour and cultural racism embodied by the ethnic signifier of being "Muslim" which comprises and objectifies the explicit projection of both (Runnymede Trust, 1997).

The third point depicts religion as waiting to prey upon free speech, so that considering the sensibilities of Muslims will set us down the road to a theocracy (lines 3 and 4). The fourth point draws upon previous themes is resurrecting the image of one's customary values being "driven out" by an accommodation of religion (line 5).

In the following passage, Toynbee is keen to stress a discourse of urgency in that we are increasingly deterred by Islam and the presence of Muslims from speaking out. The content of the complaint, meanwhile, returns us to the first theme to emerge in the analysis: Islam as anti-modern and pre-Enlightenment.

1. Fear of offending the religious is gathering ground on all sides.
2. It is getting harder to argue against the hijab and the Koran's edict that a woman's place is one step behind.
3. It is beginning to be racist for teachers or social workers
4. to object to autocratic patriarchy and submission of women within many Muslim communities. (Toynbee, 2004d)

This discourse works in three stages. The first stage involves making a general secularist point in line 1. The second stage uses a version of Islam in line 2 that invokes examples of misogyny as indicative of the treatment of Muslim women in Islam. Islam is the only example. In stage three, the apparently "neutral" secular position discursively switches into an anti-Muslim argument. It is helpful in highlighting how by a process of constant association, people and issues come to thematically define one another. At the same time, it points to one of the most interesting themes to emerge from an analysis of PMPI argumentation strategies. This is an anxiety to maintain the "right" to publicly affront religious beliefs.

### *Need to Maintain the Right to Affront Religious Peoples*

Toynbee views it as a case of

Standing against religious apartheid, atheists come into their own here. Those who are as anti-Christian as they are anti-Islamic can oppose state promotion of any religion without discrimination. (Toynbee, 2004c)

This returns us to the earlier discussions surrounding proposed legislation preventing the incitement to religious hatred, as is described by Matthew Parris of *The Times* as thus:

1. It follows that the less tolerant any religious group is of criticism or mockery,
2. the greater the protection the proposed new law will offer them.
3. But these may be the very faiths or sects which ought to be confronted—
4. confronted and attacked for the very intolerance and self-righteousness which, if this measure becomes law, will be adduced as evidence of their "sensitivity". (Parris, 2004)

This is all the more worrying for Will Hutton, who believes that there is a dialectic at work in acts of anti-Muslim racism which somehow entails a moral equivalence of

Islamicism and racism against Muslims, so that the latter cancels our sympathy for the former.

1. Racist acts against Muslims are growing explosively,
2. reciprocated by Muslim death threats against prominent politicians. (Hutton, 2004b)

### *Muslim Political Alliances are a Coalition of "Bad" Projects*

Conceptualisations of the political alliances to have emerged between the anti-war coalition and British-Muslims, in objecting to the war in Iraq, are largely negative amongst PMPI. They fairly consistently see such alliances as being forged from a common "hate" of America. For example, Toynbee argues that

1. the liberal dilemma over Islam is not unlike the prevarications of some over communism in the cold war.
2. To attack the atrocities of the reds put you in bed with the anti-socialist Thatcher/Reagan red-baiters.
3. It is bizarre ... how the left has espoused the extreme Islamicist cause: as "my enemy's enemy",
4. Muslims are the best America-haters around. (Toynbee, 2004d)

This passage immediately denies any possibility that "the Left", as she conceives the anti-war coalition, might already comprise activists who are simultaneously Muslim. Moreover, in excluding any possibility that "the Left" might find a legitimate cause in Muslim opposition to the war in Iraq on humanist grounds, she relies upon a rehearsed stereotype evident in line 4 that "Muslims are the best America-haters around". Additionally, Toynbee explicitly objects to these alliances on the grounds that they are anti-rational

1. the natural allies of the rationalists have decamped.
2. The left embraces Islam for its anti-Americanism. (Toynbee, 2004e)

She is not alone in her view. Nick Cohen, for example, laments "many of the Left" who

1. to their shame ... have broken with the Enlightenment to perform this manoeuvre.
2. They have ridden the Islamic wave ... (Cohen, 2004b)

whilst George Galloway, according to Michael Grove of *The Times*,

... enjoys the support of both the Socialist Workers' Party of Britain and the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB). Bringing Britain's leading Trotskyist organisation into alliance with the group which recently invited the homophobic and pro-suicide-bombing Dr Yusuf al-Qaradawi to London is quite a feat. (Grove, 2004)

As a final comment on this section, it is interesting to note that in opposing legislation preventing the incitement to religious hatred, Toynbee argues that "campaigners against this bad law should not be deterred by some of the bad company they join" (Toynbee, 2004d), whilst arguing that a traditionally secularist Left should be deterred by its association with Muslim groups.



## Conclusions

This article sought to examine the idea that particular print media journalists assume the role of public intellectuals. Having first reviewed some influential accounts of intellectualism, it attempted to survey the relationship of PMPI to representations of Muslims in Britain, and to identify how PMPI cultivate public notions and contribute to the formation of a particular consciousness.

Through an analysis of argumentation strategies, the discussion highlights a convergence between commentators adopting a secular liberal and conservative nationalist position. This convergence is evidenced in how the reproduction of rehearsed stereotypes exercise the power to reinforce particular perceptions and understandings of Muslims in Britain. These stereotypes simultaneously serve to inform dominant norms and reassure exclusive accounts of belonging, and are perhaps best exemplified in PMPI argumentation on multiculturalism. Here, having adopted a combative attitude to the recognition of difference, PMPI argumentation problematises Muslims in Britain by rehearsing the view that it is their very presence which invites the racism they might face, whilst simultaneously assuming the right to intervene and regulate their presence.

By encouraging us to focus upon the production of knowledge through language, a Foucaudian-inspired discourse analysis of PMPI argumentation strategies allows us to conceptualise how the production of discourses exercise the power to enforce their own validity, to the extent that established accounts of the public intellectual may actually fail to appreciate the degree to which *they themselves* are shaped by discursive currents. By this I point to Bauman and Sartre's failure to be more self-reflexive in their analysis of the role of the public intellectual as mere "interpreter" or lionised "committed" intellectual, extrapolating outwards from a universal ethical standard, particularly in comparison to Osborne's idea of the intellectual as a "mediator". With this in mind it falls to social scientists in this area to examine and scrutinise further the currency PMPI argumentation as it moves beyond the confines of newspaper journalism to inform and create public knowledge.

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## NOTES

1. This article was researched, composed and submitted prior to the events of 7/7. In the aftermath to these terrible events, PMPI discourse has demonstrably served to provide a salient narrative in conceptualising the fallout—both material and discursive—and its impact upon Muslims in Britain. It is for this reason and those made in the main body of this discussion that social scientists should engage with the content of PMPI discourse with a greater urgency and substance than we have thus far demonstrated a willingness to do.

2. Examples of what I mean by this include, amongst many others, (1) columns addressing fiscal matters by Will Hutton who, having authored several influential books including *The State We're In* (1996), *The State to Come* (1997), *The Revolution That Never Was: an assessment of Keynesian economics* (2001) and *The World We're In* (2002), obviously has an acknowledged expertise in political economy; (2) articles covering aspects of social welfare ranging from the implications of the minimum wage to private finance initiatives in the NHS by Polly Toynbee who, having published contributions including *A Working Life* (1973), *Hospital* (1977), *The Future of Care for Older People* (1996) and *Hard Work: life in low-pay in Britain* (2003), carries significant weight in her commentary on social issues; (3) the *Times* contributor Anthony Browne with *The Euro—Should Britain Join: yes or no?* (2001); (4) and *Telegraph* columnist Mark Steyn with *The Face of the Tiger and Other Tales from the New War* (2002) and *America Alone: our country's future as a lone warrior* (2005); (5) along with Kevin Myers' *An Irishman's Diary* (2000); (6) Charles Moore's *The Life of Margaret Thatcher* (2005) and *How to Be British (Policy Choice S.)* (1995); (7) *Daily Mail* columnist Simon Heffer's biography of Enoch Powell *Like the Roman* (1989), *Nor Shall My Sword: reinvention of England* (1999) and *What Tories Want* (2000); (8) Melanie Phillip's *All Must Have Prizes* (1998); (9) Peter Hitchens' *The Abolition of Britain* (2000); (10) Andrew Marr—who is also a high-profile broadcast journalist—often pens columns of national identity and British political culture, and has published *The Battle for Scotland* (1995), *Ruling Britannia: failure and future of British democracy* (1996) and *The Day Britain Died* (2000); (11) Nick Cohen is another print journalist who has published several texts on current political culture with contributions including *Cruel Britannia: reports on the sinister and the preposterous* (2000) and *Pretty Straight Guys* (2004a); (12) Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's *No Place Like Home* (1995), *Imagining the New Britain* (2001a), *Mixed Feelings: the complex lives of mixed race Britons* (2001b) and *Some of My Best Friends Are...* (2004), amongst many others offer an indicative sample in making this point.
3. Two examples can help illustrate this point. During the 1999 NATO-led intervention in Kosovo, Julie Burchill of *The Guardian* was openly and consistently hostile to the pro-intervention stance advanced by her paper. Four years later as her paper adopted a broadly anti-war stance on the US-led invasion of Iraq, she deployed an aggressively pro-war argument (see Burchill, 1999a, 1999b, 2003a, 2003b). Sam Kiley of *The Times*, however, resigned in protest at what he described as being forced to adhere to the newspaper line on Israeli–Palestinian relations, stating that “the *Times* foreign editor and other middle managers flew into hysterical terror every time a pro-Israel lobbying group wrote in with a quibble or complaint and then usually took their side against their writers. I was told I should not refer to ‘assassinations’ of Israel’s opponents, nor to ‘extra-judicial killings or executions’. No pro-Israel lobbyist ever dreamed of having such power over a national newspaper and its key writers” (see *Evening Standard*, 2001).
4. An understanding that leads the *Independent* columnist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown to argue that “print media journalists set the agenda. What appears in the newspapers is picked up by the broadcasters who frequently recycle in more subtle and acceptable forms” (see Alibhai-Brown, 1998, p. 118).
5. Literature on the idea of the public sphere is lengthy and complex. For the purposes of our discussion we should understand it as involving the two interdependent possibilities of a “communicative” and “institutional” space (cf. Habermas, 1989; Dahlgren, 1991) where democracy can be practised and citizenship rights expressed somewhere between government and society. This is achieved formally through the election of governments



and informally through the pressure of public opinion. Secondly, the mass media are increasingly central to this process since they distribute information to citizens and, at least in theory, facilitate "independent" forums for public debate (cf. Curran, 1991).

6. Inaugurated in 1997, the MCB is an umbrella organisation of over 250 local, regional and national organisations. Its aims include the promotion of consensus and unity on Muslim affairs in the UK; giving voice to issues of common concern; addressing discriminations and disadvantages faced by Muslims in Britain; encouraging "a more enlightened appreciation" of Islam and Muslims in the wider society; and working for "the good of society as a whole". With a view to representing British Muslims, it lobbies government and holds discussions with various public bodies. See [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk).
7. Without attempting to make *any* argument in favour of, or excuse, the prevalence of practices of female circumcision, it is worth recognising how often it is depicted as a routine problem amongst Muslims in Britain, particularly for South Asians, by PMPI such as Will Hutton (referred to at the beginning) when there is no evidence known to the author which would support such an assumption. This should instead be read, it will be argued in the main text, as an indicator of the extent to which the standard PMPI reading of minority practices function to reify a range of different issues.
8. In making a broader point about the currency of media discourse, Van Dijk argues that "speakers routinely refer to ... newspapers as their source (and authority) of knowledge or opinions about ethnic minorities". Hence, "social theories are (re)produced in the social worlds by the news media, influencing audience attitudes, values and beliefs, principally through their reinforcement" (Van Dijk, 1999, cited in Richardson, 2001, p. 148).
9. According to the Office for National Statistics there are approximately 1.85 million British citizens (forming 2.9 per cent of the national population) who describe themselves as "Muslim". Of this figure, roughly 50 per cent—just under one million—were born in Britain.
10. The CRE is a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation created after the implementation of Britain's first race-relations legislation in 1976. It has no legislative powers but acts as a public watch-dog "to tackle racial discrimination and promote racial equality". In recent years its current Chair, Trevor Phillips, has spoken candidly in demanding a greater degree of assimilation from Muslims in Britain. See [www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk).
11. This follows the government's unsuccessful bid to introduce the legislation alongside the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (2001)—brought in with the assurance that the clause would prevent the Act from adding to the anti-Muslim backlash after September 11. Leaving Muslims in Britain otherwise susceptible to overt public discrimination, i.e. the propagation of anti-Muslim literature for political propaganda, as witnessed in recent electoral materials circulated by the British National Party. Organisations such as the MCB and Islamic Human Rights Commission have made no secret of their lobbying government for the introduction of this legislation.

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## **Appendix IV**

All interviewees gave informed consent for the use of their transcribed interviews throughout this thesis. All research was conducted in accordance with British Sociological Association (BSA) and University of Bristol ethical guidance and requirements. Interviewees were selected on the basis of their prominence and/or their demonstrable expertise in relation to the respective topics. All interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed, before being sent to the interviewee for clarification.

### **List of Interviewees**

Tahir Alam, trustee of Al-Hijrah secondary school, director of the teacher training wing of the Al-Hijrah Trust.

Yousif Al-Khoei, the Director of the Al-Khoie Foundation.

Tony Breslin, Chief Executive of the Citizenship Foundation.

Inayat Bunglawala, Public Affairs spokesperson for the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB).

Barbara Cohen, Chair of the Discrimination Law Association (DLA) and former head of legal policy at the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)

Lee Jasper, anti-racist activist and race-equality advisor to the London Mayor.

Razia Karim, current head of CRE legal policy, Razia Karim,

Dan Lyndon, Head of History at Compton Secondary School, director of Black history for Schools and member of the member of Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA).

Idreas Mears, Director of the Association of Muslim Schools (AMS)

Arzu Merali, Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC)

Terry Sanderson, president of the National Secular Society (NSS).

Abdullah Trevathan, Headteacher of Islamia Primary School.



## Appendix V

### List of court cases and transcripts consulted

*Ahmed v. ILEA* (1976) [1QB36CA]

*Dhanjal v. British Steel Plc* (1994) [unreported]

*Ealing Borough Council ex parte Zesko v. Race Relations Board* (1972) [AC 342]

*Khan v. NIC Hygiene Ltd* (2005) [ET 1803250/04]

*Mandla v. Dowell Lee* (1983) [2AC 548]

*Mark Norwood v. DPP* (2003) [EWHC 1564]

*Mohammed v Virgin Trains* (2005) [ET 2201814/04]

*Morgan v. CSC & British Library* (1990) [DCLD 6 19177/89]

*Nyazi v. Rymans Ltd* (1988) [EAT 10 May, 1988 unreported]

*Panesar v. Nestle Co Ltd* (1980) [IRLR 64]

*R v DPP ex parte London Borough of Merton* (1998) [CO/1319/1998]

*Singh v. British Rail Engineering Ltd* (1986) [ICR 22]

*Seide v. Gillette Industries Ltd* (1980) [IRLR 427]